

DUIFJE VAN HAREN
THE NETHERLANDS/CANADA
WORLD WAR II

Interviewed by

Renia Perel

&

Reva Hollander

(March 31, 1992 & April 8, 1992)

Original Text Transcribed from Tapes

for

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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SURVIVOR-FAMILIES & FRIENDS
1995

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

INTERVIEWEE: Duifje VAN HAREN (VH)
DATE OF RECORDING: March 31, 1992 and April 8, 1992
FILE NUMBER: 22-4
TRACK NUMBER: T1-S1
INTERVIEWERS: Renia Perel (P), & Reva Hollander (H)

P: Good afternoon Duifje.

VH: Good afternoon to you, too.

P: How are you today?

VH: I'm fine, I'm wonderful.

P: Are you ready for the interview?

VH: Absolutely I'm pleased to do it.

P: We are interviewing Duifje Van Haren. Today is March 31, 1992. So pleased that you were able to allow us to come into your beautiful home, thank you.

VH: You're welcome.

P: Now can you begin at the beginning, where you were born, tell us something about your birth and your childhood and your family, how many members you had and so on.

VH: Er, I was born in Holland, in Gorinchem, a little, little city and it had 11,000 people and, ah, I think there were 105 Jewish people, and 30 of those 105 did not, eh, did survive.

P: How many did survive?

VH: 30. That's all in the paper what I showed you just before, that, that paper. And, ah, most people in that little city, were one way or another way eh, family of each other. And, eh, when I was born, my parents were not very religious, but I also have to tell you, my grandfather from my father's side, was a rabbi, but my father was very, very, ah,...

P: Orthodox?

VH: Liberal, no, very liberal, very liberal and so was my mom. And eh, and my mother died when I was only eleven, and my father after a year, remarried, and his second wife was very religious. And so we got a kosher home, and she was a wonderful, lovely, lovely, lovely lady.

P: How many, ah, stepchildren were, I mean how many children were from the first mother?

VH: Eh, three, my two bothers and myself, and eh, that was all, no er, no er, children from the second wife.

P: Did your stepmother have any children with your dad?

VH: No, no, no, no, no, no.

P: Did she bring any children?

VH: No, no, no, no, she was already forty-eight when she married. No, ya 42, no 42, (laughter) ya.

P: Uh hum, so, so you experienced a religious, orthodox religious home after your stepmother married into your home?

VH: No, I wouldn't say that, we kept kosher, and my stepmother went to Shul when...always went, and so, but my father went his own way. He let her do her way, she let him do their way, and I think it was a really wonderful, wonderful second marriage.

P: Well, so did you yourself go to synagogue, sometimes?

VH: Hardly, only with Yom tov or with eh, an occasion, and still it is the same now I only, I belong here to the North Shore synagogue, because my children belong there. And with occasions and with Yom Tov and Rosh Hashanah and, I go to Shul, but not otherwise, I'm not religious at all. I don't eat any trayf, but I have not a kosher home.

- P: When you say "Yontif" you mean a Jewish holiday?
- VH: Ya, I mean a Jewish Holidays, ya.
- P: And uhm...
- VH: Are there Yontif in non-Jewish holidays? You don't call it Yontif, is it? I think so (laughs).
- P: I'm not too sure, but I believe it ah, it is from the Hebrew, "Yom Tov," a good day.
- VH: Ah ha.
- P: (laughter) I'm not sure. (pause) And uh, did you receive any Hebrew education?
- VH: I received very little, there was, an [a] gentleman, what was the Shammes, and he also give some Jewish lessons on the children, [word not clear on tape] children, and I was there, and my brother, he was two years older, and my other brother was four years older as me, and there was one other girl what was in the same age as me, and she had a brother. And that was the extent of all the children in that little place. So we didn't have much Jewish education at all.
- P: So did you have private lessons from this, you called it Shammes? Do you remember what does it mean?
- VH: Uh, uh, he put the lights on, and he was the Shammes in the shul, how you call it? I, I'm not so good with those things (laughter). You would know better (laughter). He was a very, very religious man, I know that.
- P: And he was teaching you privately?
- VH: He was, no he was teaching not me privately, those few children one afternoon a week, or maybe one afternoon in the two weeks, or something, nothing on a regular basis. We had very little out of it.

- P: But, you are able to read a little bit of Hebrew?
- VH: No, absolutely not. Absolutely not.
- P: And ah, ah, was there a synagogue in your city?
- VH: There was, yes, there was a synagogue and ah, there was hardly minyan, hardly ever minyan. Ah, also a bar mitzvah on occasion, and sometime with High Holidays I think they let come in, come to Gorinchem, a rabbi or a khazen in from another place to have services.
- P: So, do you remember any, like other, ah, Jewish institutions such as a kosher butcher or a ..
- VH: Eh, no.
- P: Or a store selling kosher products?
- VH: No. I know when my son had his bris, we had to get it all from Amsterdam, and also we had a kosher home and our meat came from eh, Amsterdam or an other place, I couldn't remember. But, anyway from out of town.
- P: Yes.
- VH: We had to order everything from out of town.
- P: So what is about your secular education, what did you...?
- VH: Very little, I'm not a student, I never was a student, and I only had my, eh, grade nine education.
- P: Um hum, but grade nine in Europe was quite a high education at that time!
- VH: Ah, ya, it was better than here grade nine maybe (laughter), but I was a very, very, I was [a] bad student.
- P: Ah ha, you and, did you learn a, a, a trade, like handy craft, I see
- VH: I'm very, yes I'm very handy with my hands, and I was a very good businessman, eh, businesswoman all the time. Look I was,

I'm very good with my hands.

P: So tell us about your youth, did you belong to any Jewish organization?

VH: Eh, no I did not belong to a Jewish organization. As it was in Holland in those, in those time, eh, because there was nothing in the little city, and I wouldn't dare to go out on a date with a non-Jewish person. That was...that was not ...

P: Not acceptable?

VH: No, that was not acceptable, but I would say about three, four times in the winter, in all those little places, they were all thirty kilometres from each other, the, all the province, the young people came together and there were dances, and there were, and there I always went. I was allowed to go to that and I always went and I always had a very, very good time.

P: Ah, how beautiful, so you ah, umh...

VH: And also there were ah, ah, through that you got friends from different little cities and they came over to your place, and stayed at your place, and then you organized a nice evening, invited other ah,...

P: Young people?

VH: Young people over. And, so ah, I couldn't say I had a bad time. I didn't know better. (laughter)

P: So you enjoyed your teen, teenhood and your youth?

VH: Absolutely, absolutely, ya.

P: Now you don't have to tell us when you were born, but if you wish to then ah, you know, then you can add that later on, eh, but I'm going now closer since after your education and your youth. Perhaps you can tell us now about how, how you met your, ah, future husband.

VH: Ah, that is another thing, that's very funny. In that time it was the War already, it was a, I met my, ah, late husband in 1942. At that time ...

P: 19...?

VH: 1942

P: '42?

VH: '42, and at that time and date you still could travel and my hus... my father, eh, was travelling to another city, and missed his connection with the train and met a young man what also, oh, had to go in the same direction, and they talked and, and, discovered that they both were Jewish, and that young man was travelling, was travelling and selling leather, eh, leather settees, leather corsage, leather things. And, eh, as it so was, my dad said, "Oh there is a very beautiful store in Gorinchem, what would really be very successful with your articles, so you should come one time and come to Gorinchem and sell those articles there. And if you have a good sale, here you have my address, and come to my house and, and tell what you did." And...

P: He invited him?

VH: Right. And I tell you in that time the German Jews were already, ah, how you call it, ah...?

P: The German armies, or...?

VH: No, the German Jews, eh, were already flying [fleeing from] Germany, and [there] were lots of [them] came to Gorinchem. And one of those, ah, one of those German Jews, ah, was in Germany, Mr. Felchenfeld was his name, and was in Germany a teacher at the university in English. Em, there were, oh, I would say at least ten, twelve families from Germany what fled

to Gorinchem. And there were different children, and Mr. Felchenfeld was an older man, I think he was in his, oh, I would say in his seventies, and he liked to do something so he offered to give the young people that were now in Gorinchem English lesson. And I was one of those, eh, person what he teached, and that was one time at my house, one time at there, another house, and one time in another house, and other ...

H: Could you just please spell his name.

VH: Mr, well...

H: Or say it slower.

VH: Felchenfeld

H: Felchenfeld

VH: I think (writing and spelling in background)

P: Here, look at that.

VH: I think that's the name, I think, but if it is wrong, I don't know. I, I think that's the way, the way you write it.

P: Ichfeld?

VH: F-E-I-C-H Felchenfeld.

P: F-E-I-C-H-E-N-F-E-L-D

VH: I am not positive if it is spelled, if it is spelled okay, but you pronounce it that way.

P: Thank you.

VH: And anyway, as it so happened one afternoon, it was in my house, and we sat around the table, and maybe twelve people, I don't know exactly, I can't remember. And the bell rang and I went and opened the door and there was a young man and asked if he could speak to Mr Van Dam, that was my father, and I said, "Sure". And so I showed him to my father and then I went back to my, eh, to, to the group [of] people and I didn't

see anything any more, not from the man, not from my father, we had lessons from Mr. Feichenfeld. The next morning when, in that time the milk came three times a day, on seven o'clock in the morning, on one o'clock in the afternoon, and on five o'clock in the evening, and the next morning on seven o'clock I got a letter. (laughter) And the letter was from that young man and, and in the letter it said, he saw me for just for a few minutes at the door and he would love to see me again and, and if he could make an appointment to...

P: To meet?

VH: To meet. And I showed the letter on [to] my father and my husband, my late husband, he was not eh, looking Jewish at all. If you saw him you would say that he is a goy, when you saw him. And I said to my father, "Look this letter", Ik sag [I said], "He was not Jewish". And my father says, "Yes, he was, I spoke to him by the train eh, station and he is Jewish."

P: Who said that?

VH: Eh, my father told me.

P: Oh.

VH: And, so I said, well that's a...case fellow, there was nothing to do. You could very little do, by the way, already. You couldn't go in any restaurant any more, because it was all "verbieden" [forbidden] eh, not allowed for Jewish people to go in the restaurant any more.

P: What year is this now?

VH: 1942.

P: Oh, this is late '42, mid '42, Spring?

VH: No, no, no, in the beginning of 1942, or maybe it was late?

- P: Okay, early '42.
- VH: I'm sorry, I think it was no, it was not '42, it was 1941.
I'm sorry I made a mistake, it was end '41.
- P: So the whole um, encounter that you refer to and father met
your future date on the train, and invited him to the house,
and the entire episode belongs to 1941.
- VH: Right, right, right. Sometime I get mixed up.
- P: Ah, anyway, you know.
- VH: An ah, ...
- P: So this is spring '41?
- VH: Yes, I guess so, yes. It's so hard to remember. I think it
was spring '41, but anyway there was one lady what had a big
serre [greenhouse, or veranda] I would say, and she ...
- P: A big what?
- VH: An, an, a big an, an how you (mumble) it's all glass in, uh,
like (mumble) in, a serre, in a veranda, like an enclosed
veranda...
- P: Balcony with, uh,...
- VH: Balcony with, with glass for, and she served tea and coffee
and pastry. And she didn't have any sign up, for not allowed
for Jews, so I wrote back to the young man accept, well if you
liked come, you, you can come, but there is no place in
Gorinchem where you can go any more. We can't go to movies
any more, you can't go to any restaurants any more, there's
only one little place what serve cup of tea, or a cup of
coffee, and that's all. Anyway he was happy to come and he
came and I picked him up from the train station and we went
that afternoon there and it was nice, it was little place, but
it was nice, it was over looking big river. And, but what

would you do after an hour, you don't know what to do, you couldn't stay there, you, so I said, I invited him to my house. I said, "Well, there's nothing, actually if you want to, go with me to, a my house, you're very welcome." So he came to my house, and eh, that was a very pleasant afternoon, but he didn't make any eh, eh, move to go, (laughter) to go away, he just stayed down, he didn't, you know, he was ...

P: He didn't try to leave, you mean?

VH: Right, (laughter) he didn't try to leave. So by supper time he still was there so we invited him over for supper, and, ah...

P: He just stayed!

VH: Yes, stayed, yes, yes, (laughter) but in that time I had a very good friend, where [who] I went out with a lot, for, oh, maybe one, two, more over two years, and he lived in another little place, an half hour with the train. And as it so happened I had the next day a date with him to go to an opera in Dordrecht, a little city about twenty-three kilometre from Gorinchem.

P: Could you spell all the names that you mention, Dordrecht, how do you spell it?

VH: Dordrecht, D-O-R-D-R-E-C-H-T. Right, and for that reason I want to go let off my late (laughter) what later became my late husband. And I said, oh, and by that time I think there was not even a train any more that he could go away that night, so he slept at our home and I say er, Albert was his name. Ek se, "Albert, you can stay till tomorrow morning, but I'm going away tomorrow because I have a date with a friend of me, and I'm going," and the next day was Sunday, "and I'm

going there." He said, "Oh, then I'll take the same train, train and I'm going to er," what was the name now, a little place by er, I've forgotten the name. It was a little city by er, a little city by er, Layden. I don't know, it had, there was an aunt from my late husband living and he was going and to visit her. So ...

P: So ..

VH: But, he was so clinging to me, that I want to get rid of him, (laughter) and when the train stopped in Dordrecht, where I had to get out, I said, "I". The train was not even at a standstill, I said, "Now goodbye Albert, bye," and I just left him, because I couldn't get rid of the young man.

P: Pushed him away you mean?

VH: More or less, I just fled. Right, the other young man was waiting for me at (laughter) the station, and that was, that was that.

P: That is showing the push, that's how I got it, I was'nt editing it. (Pause) And so, ...

VH: So, then so, he went toward his, in Oestgeest, now it came to me, that little place where his aunt lived was Oestgeest.

H: Can you spell that? (in the background Isaac Gokkes spells it O-E-S-T-G-E-E-S-T) (mumbling in background)

P: O-E-S-T-G-E-E-S-T

VH: Ya. Now the next morning, now you must understand, it was Sunday, 12 o'clock that he left me. The next morning on 7 o'clock I had a letter in my, in at home, in our mailbox from him, telling me if I want to come the next weekend to Oestgeest, because his aunt had invited me.

P: His aunt?

VH: His aunt had invited me. And I did not believe a word of it, because how could it be. He left at 12 o'clock, he had to go to Oestgeest and at 7 o'clock in the morning I had a letter in my mailbox. So I wrote a letter back that I was not used to those kinds of friends, because I didn't want somebody to lie to me and for that reason I didn't like that very much. I tell you the next day, because my letter had to go to Oestgeest and his letter came back the next day, in the morning, and he wrote me as prove (tape not clear) that I asked my dingus, you will receive this letter also at 7 o'clock in the morning, because I took a bag and went to the train and put the letter right on the train, this mail right on the train, so you would have it very quick and my aunt had invited you. So I thought, oh boy what did I do. Now he would never, then I was impressed at him, because (laughter) for that reason, for that reason I was very ...

P: He was, you liked his persistence?

VH: Right, right, that's what I liked. (laughter) I was missing that in that other man, what I know for two years already. He was a very nice man too and, and luckily also survived the war. Er, and so I wrote him a letter back and made my excuse and I...

P: And you made your ..

VH: Excuse. And I thought, well I would never hear from him again and I could kick myself, you know.

P: In other words, you apologised for ...

VH: I apologised for er, telling him that I, that I thought he was lying to me.

P: That you misinterpreted.

- VH: Right. Anyway, I got another letter, and he took my apologise and he was looking for the window if he can get of he, if I would write back, and I was looking for the window of mail brought me a letter. (laughter) Anyway, it ended up very well. So, and the next weekend I went to his aunt in Oestgeest,...
- P: Oh, you accepted the invitation!
- VH: Oh yes.
- P: Ya, and you went there?
- VH: And she was a lovely old lady, lovely, lovely lady, and er, and with a son and his nephew of course and I had a great time.
- P: Ah ha, and you fell in love?
- VH: And er, I guess that ...
- P: Eventually ..
- VH: You could say that, eventually. He came, he came weekends to er, Gorinchem. And then his parents lived in Groningen, that is the farest part north from Holland.
- P: Groningen?
- VH: Groningen.
- P: Ah ha, that's spelt ...
- VH: G-R-O-N-I-N-G-E-N (shuffling of papers)
- H: This is where his parents lived?
- VH: That's where his parents lived. And his parents invited me to come and visit them. So I went, I went over there, and also I had a wonderful time. They were beautiful people, lovely people.
- P: And this is the Van Haren?
- VH: Van Haren, ya.
- P: And er, Albert ey?

VH: Albert was his name. Albert Jakob. Albert Jakob. (Pause)

P: Ja, right.

VH: And then eventually on er, 29th of June, we got engaged.

P: Oh, when was that, the date you remember?

VH: The 29th of June.

P: 1941?

VH: 1941, right.

P: And when was the wedding?

VH: And the wedding was the chupah, the, the wedding for the, in Holland we had two weddings. First, for the court house, that was 10 of April, that was not for any means for Jewish people.

P: April, 10.

VH: 10, but on April of 15 I had a Chupah. (In background - Isaac Gokkes - says civil, civil marriage).

P: Ye, well er, when was the civil marriage, say it again?

VH: April the 10th.

P: 1942.

VH: 1942, ja, and the 15th of April was the Chupah.

P: Er, the Chupah, what is a Chupah?

VH: A Chupah, you know is a Jewish wedding in a synagogue. That was a very sad, sad er, occasion because the brother of my husband was picked up already and ...

P: In Groningen?

VH: Er, no he was married and he lived in (pause) ...

P: Enschede (tape not clear)

VH: By, by, by, Enschede, er, a little, little city by the Latern, a little town, it will come back to me, it will come back to me. Anyway he was picked up because er, and he was, and he had a mixed marriage. A er, but, there was er, sabotage, the

people sabotaged the German soldiers and cut a cables. And as reprisal they picked in Enschede two hundred Jewish men up and got them to the concentration camp in Mauthausen.

P: One moment this is very important. Will you please spell the names.

VH: Ya, (shuffling of papers and mumbling) Enschede...

P: E-N-S-C-H-E-D-E

VH: He lived not in Enschede, he lived in, er, may in Enschede they, they, they had to pick up two hundred Jewish men ...

P: Young men? Just men?

VH: Any, any, any age. But, they couldn't come to two hundred, they had only hundred and ninety nine, for that reason they went to that little suburb and picked up my brother's ...

P: Your brother-in-law!

VH: My brother-in-law.

P: Your future brother-in-law!

VH: My future brother-in-law.

P: And er, what was his first name?

VH: Ah, Jo.

P: It's spelt...

VH: I never have met him. (in background J-O) J-O. Ja Jo.

P: And he didn't survive?

VH: And six weeks later we get his er, death sentence stuff, that he, er...

P: You got the notification!

VH: Notification, six weeks later he was er, died for er, they caught one of the others...

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE 1

INTERVIEWEE: Duifje VAN HAREN (VH)

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INTERVIEWERS: Renia Perel (P), & Reva Hollander (H)

P: Okay, you were saying, I want you to repeat for the record.
When they picked up, eh, the men in Enschede.

VH: Right...

P: From there, what happened to these men?

VH: They all died.

P: You said that something about Mauthausen.

VH: Right, they all send them to Mauthausen nobody comes back.
No, not one of them. They all were...

P: So, eh...

VH: Where he lived my, eh, future brother-in-law, it was a little suburb. I can't remember the name, it will come later to me, but anyway, they hear there was a razzia in Enschede and he was hiding himself in the woods because it was there in the woods where they live, and he was hiding the whole day in the woods, and somebody told the Germans, somebody from the Dutch police told the Germans that he was there and they picked him up.

P: So when you say "razzia" that's like when they were...

VH: Rounded up and picked up.

P: Rounding up Jewish men.

VH: Right, and picking up.

P: So that's called "razzia" and it's spelled R-A-Z-I-A?

VH: No, I think it's spelled...

P: Razzia (Sound of writing on paper).

VH: I think with two z's.

P: Two z's, well, okay. Eh, so...

VH: So that's one, Dutch by policemen, what give him away.

P: So the Dutch police are actually, eh, discovered that he was hiding and they notified.

VH: Well, he was, he was a member from the police. He was in, a [Dutch word] how you call it here? Like here the, (comments in background - Mounties) like here the mounted police, that was what he was.

P: Your brother-in-law?

VH: So one of his colleagues gave him away. (comment in background - from the police).

P: One of the policemen would, gave him away. That's very sad. What eh, what ah, I want to go back now about, eh, your future brother-in-law, your Jakob, Albert Jakob's brother...

VH: Right.

P: And when he was picked up by policemen...

VH: Right.

P: Or the RMCP type of man...

VH: Right.

P: When the notification came about his, eh, death, did it come from Mauthausen?

VH: Yes.

P: And this is how you knew that the others were shipped to Mauthausen, is that it?

VH: No, no, no, it was everybody knows it. If the there was still...

P: Everybody knew that...

- VH: Everybody know that they picked up two hundred, everybody had family there, or friends there, or I had very good friends in Enschede and I know that too...
- P: And everyone knew definitely that these men were sent to Mauthausen?
- VH: Oh yes, oh yes.
- P: So that was no secret?
- VH: That was no secret, no, no, no, no, no, no.
- P: So your wedding, you were saying was saddened by this event, and when was, he was picked up about that time, April '42?
- VH: And he was dead already before we married. I mean, my, my wedding was not a picnic.
- P: It was not a joyful event.
- VH: No, that was a very sad event.
- P: Ah ha.
- VH: Very sad.
- P: Where was it held, in your city, in your...
- VH: Yes in Gorinchem, ya.
- P: In your town?
- VH: Ya, ya.
- P: So what happened, eh, I, I don't want to go to the end I'd like to know now, did Jakob survive? Your husband.
- VH: My husband, yes, my husband we survived. We were so lucky, so lucky. They came in the front door to pick us up on [at] seven o'clock in the morning and we fled through the back door.
- P: So what day was that, that's an important date?
- VH: That was on [the] 15th of October, exactly six months after our wedding. 15th of October, 1942.

P: 1942.

VH: And in that time already, when we were married, you couldn't move anymore. Jewish people couldn't move, Jewish people couldn't ride a train, Jewish people couldn't 'this' couldn't 'that'.

P: You mean the laws were instituted that you couldn't?

VH: All of them, all of them, so for that reason, we lived in the same house as my parents.

P: Oh, when you married, you moved in to your parents house?

VH: Right.

P: Because there was no other place to go?

VH: There was no other place to go.

P: And when did they round up the Jews in your town? Like that was the day October...

VH: That was the October...

P: 15th?

VH: That was the day October the 15th.

P: 1942.

VH: Now, wait that time, I, maybe I should go a little bit back now. First...

P: If you're going back, just one moment. Was the Khupa, when you say a rabbi married you?

VH: Oh, yes, yes.

P: So, we'll add that.

VH: Yes, yes.

P: Do you remember the name of that rabbi?

VH: Eh, no, I think no it was not the rabbi, it was the cantor, Max Seyfers. I wrote it in your dingus [thing].

P: Cantor...

VH: Seyfers...

P: C-E.

VH: Max Seyfers.

P: C-E-Y-F-E-R-S.

VH: Ya...

P: Ceyfers.

VH: Just one minute please, I think it was not a 'C', can I see?

P: 'C'.

VH: Oh, ya, or maybe it was an 'S'.

P: 'G' or 'C'?

VH: It was a 'C' or it was an 'S', I think it was an 'S'
(shuffling of paper).

P: I think it was a 'C'.

VH: No, I think it was an 'S'. Ya, I'm sorry, it was an 'S', ya.

P: Oh, 'S', okay. (shuffling of paper)

VH: I say, even a little interruption, he survived, too.
(laughter)

P: Thank you, so Max Seyfers...

VH: Ya.

P: Did...

VH: I might maybe go back a little because it was...

P: Now, you can go back if you want to.

VH: Not only a sad, a sad, ah, (pause) occasion, but also my
brother was already picked up.

P: Okay, so...

VH: My oldest brother.

P: You can just back up and say, what, when and um...

VH: My oldest brother lived in St. Laurens.

P: He was married or not?

VH: He was married and he had a little son, from that time I would say six years.

P: What was his name?

VH: Philip, Philip Van Dam.

P: We'll correct the spelling later.

VH: Ya.

H: What was the name of the place where he lived?

VH: St. Laurens, I'll write it for you (pause while writing). And that was a suburb from Middelburg, a Middelburg was the, was the, ah, province, Zeeland was the main city from, this was the capital... (In the background - capital, that was the capital of...) This was the capital from, eh, Middelburg was the capital van [of], Zeeland. Zeeland is a province on the South West van [of] Holland.

P: It's St...

VH: St. Laurens.

P: Laurens and...

VH: That's about twenty minutes from Middelburg.

P: Thank you, so your brother was married. Now you can just go ahead.

VH: Ya, and he was married and my sister-in-law, her parents, her three brothers and their wives and their family, parents and they all went the 5th of May, 1940, when the war broke out, try to get still out of the country and try to get a ship to go over there, another country what was not occupied.

H: What was the date of that again?

VH: That was May the 5th.

P: 5th, 1940.

VH: 1940.

H: 1940.

VH: They did not have a chance. And because they did not have a chance, they went another way and they travelled across, and they came as far, they were with seventeen people and they came as far as French [France], and they wanted to go from French [France] to Spain, but they never got a chance. Oh, sorry, they never got a chance, and because they never got a chance, after a few months they came all back to Holland, because there was no food, because you couldn't get food without a food card. And they all came back, and by that time after maybe they were home again maybe a few months, I don't really, really, really don't know the dates or exactly the times any more, but there was there a new, ah, how you call it? A law, because St. Laurens is right on the coast. Every Jew had to go, move from the coast to go to Amsterdam in a ghetto. So my brother moved to the ghetto, and his in-laws, and the...

P: The entire family?

VH: The entire family, had to leave Middelburg and St. Laurens and had to move in Amsterdam in the ghetto. At that time they were look, because there were all razzias every time they picked up young men, they started with the young men. They picked them up pretending they had to go just to work, but that was not true. And by that time they were looking for places to hide themselves. And my brother's, my brother's, ah, brother-in-law, found them for him and his wife and the little boy, a place by the Turkish consul, and they hide them away.

P: In Amsterdam?

VH: In Amsterdam.

H: Your brother's brother-in-law found a place?

VH: Found a place for my brother, his wife and the little boy.

P: This is Jakob's brother, ya?

VH: No.

P: No.

VH: No, no, no, no, that is Philip's.

H: No, no, her brother, Philip's.

VH: That is Philip's, eh brother-in-law.

H: So it was for your brother Philip and...

VH: And his wife, Jetje and...

H: How do you spell that?

VH: Eh, J-E-T-J-E, and the little boy, B-R-A-M-M-E-T-J-E.

P: Bram...

VH: Brammetje, ya.

H: And that was near the Turkish consul?

VH: And they hide them away by, the...

P: Near...

VH: By the Turkish consul, by the Turkish consul they were.

P: Inside the Turkish consulate or near?

VH: I don't know if it was in the consulate or if it was in his private place, I couldn't tell you, I don't know, I never know that. But what I do know is, the Nazis came to that place because they were looking for somebody else, came to that place, that somebody else was not there, but they found my brother, his wife and the little boy and took them away, and took them to, Auschwitz. We got one last letter from my brother because they rounded them up in the, Schouwburg [theatre] in the, how you call the Schouwburg? In the

Amsterdam, in the (in background - "theatre") theatre. They rounded up all the Jews in the theatre, in the big theatre in Amsterdam, and from there my brother wrote his last letter to us.

P: His last letter that you had was from the round up place which was the theatre...

VH: Right.

P: Where all the Jews were...

VH: Right.

P: The Dutch, (in background - "Dutch theatre" they called it).

P: Yes.

VH: Ya, right.

P: In Amsterdam, and the letter was not from Auschwitz, but...

VH: No, no, no, no...

P: It was from Amsterdam?

VH: Was from, was from there, right and, and the letter said, [that] we shouldn't be worried because we will all be back. That's what everybody thought because nobody know it was that bad. But, still I, we, my dad and me, too, were not that optimistic, because we hear from truck drivers what came back from Germany already told that the Germans were killing all the Jews in the concentration camps, were gassing them, and that came already that...

P: What year was that news?

VH: That was 1942, also, 1942, ya. It was end of 1942, we hear all those, those stories already.

P: Ah ha, did you believe it?

VH: Yes I did. So did my father, he did, too.

P: Maybe that's why you're alive.

VH: Eh, yes, yes, and no, because my father didn't want to live anymore. When his son already was gone he had the opportunity also to hide himself, he didn't want anymore. No.

P: So now, eh, your wedding, eh, so your father was taken away also before your wedding?

VH: Right. And we...

P: So you had your own sadness in addition to your future husband's sadness.

VH: Right, right.

P: When did you know that he was taken, do you know that date, approximately?

VH: No, I can't.

P: Was it before your wedding, it had to be?

VH: Yes, oh yes, yes, yes.

P: So would be in '42, 1942?

VH: Oh yes, yes, yes.

P: Ah ha, the beginning of '42?

VH: Yes, the beginning in, eh, yes, ya, because they, they started with all the young, the young Jewish men, and pretending they had to work.

P: Hmhmm.

VH: For Germany. What was of course not true.

P: So that...

VH: And then we...

P: What about your other brother?

VH: My other brother lives in Victoria.

P: Oh, how lucky.

VH: My other brother, that's maybe very interested for you...

P: He's the younger one, or?

VH: I'm the youngest from the three, and he's the youngest brother, ya. And my other brother, he...

P: What's his name first?

VH: Eh, Samuel.

P: Samuel, just like Samuel.

VH: Ya, Samuel. He hide himself away. He went underground hiding away, six weeks before we did it, and, eh, he was the first in the, well besides my older brother, but um, he was, eh, he was hiding away. He hid in a cosmetic store in, eh, Gorinchem, and, eh, all of a sudden one day, there was a little sign on the store, ah, away for holiday, because he didn't want to, you know, there's lots of people, eh, close the stores for holiday, put a little sign on "Back on August" or back on that day or something like that. So he did it too, but he went underground. And he had a friend, and that man was working for the illegal and tried save people. He was a wonderful, beautiful, wonderful man, but...

P: He was the underground worker.

VH: Right, what saved a lots of people. And (sigh), and he, my brother, he took my brother in for a little while and found them a permanent place for him, because he found places for different people. And of course we know him very well, too, and we ask him to find us a place too. And it was very difficult to find places, very, very dismal, and he said, "I'll do my best, I'll do my best, don't worry, we will find you a place." But in the meantime there were razzias here, there were razzias there, and of course we got very nervous. And as it so happened, he came to visit us on the 14th of October at night.

P: At night?

VH: At night. And he was visiting us, just paying us a visit, and we said, "Jo, please find us a place, because this, it wouldn't be..."

P: His name was Jo?

VH: His name was Jo. Jo Hage.

P: How do you spell that, this is an important...

VH: H-A, H-A-G-E.

H: And Jo is just J-O-?

VH: J-O. And he said, he was a nice person, and he said, "You Jewish people," and he didn't mean it in a bad way, but he meant it in a nice way. He said, "You're all very nervous, and I can understand," he said. He said, "But don't worry, if there come a razzia in Gorinchem, we are the first one to know and we give you a sign and you don't have to be worried." He said, "If something came in between, make sure, a Gorinchem has lots of water and there's the river Delinga, and there's a bridge here and a bridge here, and there's a bridge here, and there's a bridge here. We live by this bridge." And he said, "Be on the second bridge, we will pick you up there. If something happen make sure you show up on the second bridge." The name of the bridge I've forgot it already. They all have names these bridges, but I really forgot the name for the bridge. (Pause). As it so happened, that night, we were talking with my parents, he left at eleven o'clock or so and we were talking till two o'clock in the night with my parents. That have [has] never happened before, that night we talked till two o'clock at night.

P: You and your husband and mother and...

VH: And my step-mother and my father. The next morning on seven o'clock there was no sign, there was no nothing, they were on the front door, the Nazis to pick us up.

P: Who was at the front door, the...?

VH: The Nazis, to pick us up. And we saw them, and we fled [through] the back door, okay,...

P: All four of you?

VH: No, my parents did not want to go. What I didn't know was that they planned already, but they never told us, we live on a big, big river. On the back of our house was the Malwader, a big, big river, and on the front of our house was a little harbour. Now, my parents sprung in the river, and tried to drown themselves. What we didn't know, we were already, we fled already. But the Germans picked them out of the river and got them anyway to, ah, ah, (in background - Auschwitz) Auschwitz.

P: So your parents were shipped to Auschwitz?

VH: Ya, they picked them out of the river and shipped them to Auschwitz. Now, I must say, we live here and then there is an next with, lives, next house lived the, the director from the (in background - brewery) brewery. From the Setabay brewery, big brewery in Holland. Then there is an ally, and then next to the ally is a big, big, eh, warehouse, a warehouse what come out on the harbour. Because with the ships the barrels with beer came in and go to the, to the warehouse. And luckily the door from the warehouse was open...

P: Open!

VH: We went in, we went in the warehouse and my husband took the barrels and put them up, up, up, up, up, and we stand in

between the barrels the whole day. But (pause - sigh) now I have to tell you a little in between. My, I have lived there for thirty-five years in that house, I was born there, I lived there for thirty-five years, my parents lived there of course longer than me, because I was born in there, and the neighbours, the director from the, from the...

P: Brewery.

VH: Brewery lived even longer there and my parents and, and the,...

P: And the brewery ...

VH: And the brewery people were very good, good friends. When we were standing there, they know we fled in the, in the warehouse, they came about ten o'clock in the morning or nine o'clock, I couldn't even remember any more, and said, "You have to get out because it is too dangerous for us." And we said to them, "If we get out, we are dead, we are dead! So we don't go out, if you want to give us away, we're dead if we go out, we're dead too; it's up to you. But we don't go out, you can give us away, but we don't go out." And we didn't, we stayed. And also maybe I must...go a little back. Oh, when we were married we got lots of presents as you can understand, and, and so. And my, my family, eh, were, eh, comfortable people not rich, but just comfortable and have of course lots of nice things through the years and those people at the brewery said: "Give it to us, we save it for you, give us everything, we will keep it for you, when you come back, have everything back." So of course we did, it was most wonderful people, we were there, ah, best friends I would say. Or not the best friends, but very, very close friends.

P: Great neighbours!

VH: Great neighbours, great neighbours. And so we did and everything that we got when we were married and everything we gave them too, of course. Normal thing to do. That was just an interruption. And we stand there for the whole, whole day, till it was dark and then, you know. We could do two things, we could go through back allies to the second bridge, or we could go right through town to it, and my husband, they know me very well because I born there and grew up. Little place everybody knows me, I went school there, everybody knows me. But nobody knows my husband because he came from another part of, of Holland and we were not that long engaged and so nobody know him. And he didn't look Jewish too, and I look very Jewish, right? So, eh, and my husband said: "You know, if you go through the back allies where they look for you, they look to the back allies. They wouldn't look right on the main streets, let we go through the main streets. And just keep your patience, keep in side of..." (tape not clear) so that's what we did. And of course by the second bridge Jo Hage was there...

P: So you walked...

VH: To pick us up.

P: Through the main street and walked up to the second bridge?

VH: We went just to the main dingus [thing] and we went to the second bridge and there of course he was waiting for us.

P: Jo was waiting for you?

VH: He was waiting for us, as he had promised. He was waiting for us. And he took us first to his house and of course I was completely out of my mind because I know already my parents

were in the river, and I know...

P: They told you?

VH: They told me, and, and, and they told me, and on the other side, oh don't let me forget that. On the other side from our home was a big, big 'pastory' how you, I don't know how you call it here. A reverend was living there in, a reverend, a 'Dominee' and then a pastor or the reverend?

P: A reverend?

VH: Eh, how you call it here?

H: A pastor.

VH: Ya, was living there in a big house, and give, eh, lessons and all of this. It was a very big house, and that by the...

P: Was it a parish, a church?

VH: It was not a church, it was where he lived.

P: A private home or...?

VH: A private home. A very big, big, big, big private home, where he also gave lessons to his, his, eh, to his children and something like that.

P: Instructions in religion.

VH: Right, right.

H: And this was where, next door to your house?

VH: That was in the other side.

P: On the other side.

VH: On the other side. And when they picked my, my, eh, parents out of the river, they came over, they took their clothes, they dried the clothes in the, in a, in, eh, in a laundry. Went over to the laundry and packed warm clothes for them and they did everything what they could do to make a little comfortable for my parents. And, eh, (sigh - long pause).

And...

P: The Germans let them?

VH: Yes they first let them and then they said: "If you do more, if you interfere more we will take you too." So that was the end of it. And then that Jo that picked us up on the second bridge took us first to his home and make some white tea for us and because I was crying of course, as you can understand, I was total, total, not there anymore. But we couldn't stay in his house, and because he had a place for us. And the place was a little, dilapidated house in a very poor, poor neighbourhood, and when he brought us over there you would not believe what was in there. All kinds of 'minitsy', places where they print the false papers, and German costumes what they could, eh, make themselves, eh...

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2]

INTERVIEWEE: Duifje VAN HAREN (VH)

DATE OF RECORDING: March 31, 1992 and April 8, 1992

FILE NUMBER: 22-4

TRACK NUMBER: T2-S1

INTERVIEWERS: Renia Perel (P), & Reva Hollander (H)

P: Okay, you were telling us now about...

VH: Where he brought us, to that place...

P: Yes, where they brought you.

VH: Yes.

P: Before I want to back up a little bit. You said it was the, a dilapidated house.

VH: Right.

P: Is that, in that dilapidated house where all this underground work was hidden?

VH: Right, right, right.

P: So, that it was a camouflage that it looked sort of...

VH: Right, right, right. But between all other poor houses in a poor district, you know?

P: But it's in the same town, where you were born?

VH: Ya, oh ya, in the middle of the town in a, eh...

P: And there was an owner of the house, too?

VH: No, no, no, no, no it was an empty house.

P: It was an empty house?

VH: Empty house, and next to it was a house, another house and another house, and next to it was another house, and another house, very poor, poor people. You know, very poor district.

P: District.

VH: But it was the 15th of October and it was a very, very cold

winter. So cold I can't tell you. And of course we could not put on heating because otherwise you would see the smoke, and they know it was an empty house. The people thought it was an empty house, right?

P: You couldn't put the light on either!

VH: We couldn't put a light on, we couldn't cook, we couldn't do nothing. The only thing what we could do, there was a mattress on the floor, we could sit on the mattress. And Jo was every night bringing us food. He brought it from home, and every night he brought us food. And maybe I should stop there, because after six weeks he said: "I got afraid, because I'm afraid people see me coming at night, every night, and it's not so safe, and I am afraid to leave you here, I'll take you to my home, and I'll try to find another place." But it was very difficult for him.

P: So you were telling him?

VH: No, he,...

P: You, you told...

VH: He was, he was telling us.

P: He was telling you...

VH: Us.

P: That it's becoming too dangerous...

VH: Too dangerous...

P: For him to continue...

VH: Right. For him and for us.

P: Yes.

VH: For everybody.

P: So what was his suggestion, that you go?

VH: And he said: "I'll take you home, at my place."

P: Your, oh, his own place.

VH: His own place, and for the meantime and you stay at my place and I'll try to find a permanent place for you both.

P: Well!

VH: And I think we should leave it there because then you get a whole other...

P: Ya, perspective. Where you moved from there, yes, full stop.
[pause]

P: It's April 8, 1992, we are revisiting Duifje Van Haren to continue the interview, and as we walked in she made us delicious coffee and beside that now she is showing us a picture of the brewery from, Gorinchem. Ya, where she was hiding and we hope to reproduce it. She also showed us two letters, the last letter from her father after he was taken away by the Nazis and the last letter from her brother-in-law, from her husband's brother, to his family. A few hours later he was picked up by the Nazis and died six weeks later in Mauthausen. We would like two copies of these three documents showing and possibly include them in the story. Thank you. After Jo asked you to leave this place to abandon where he feared for his own, for your life, then what happened? Where did he take you and your husband?

VH: To his own house, what was about, ah, I would say a ten minute walk, because Gorinchem is a very small little city, and, ah, we got a room upstairs in his house. And as very nice he was, his wife was not very nice to us. And actually I would not say she was not very nice, actually I'd rather say she wanted to get rid of us because she was very afraid. Because it was

very, ah, just as dangerous for them to keep us, as for us when they came and find us, they would take them too. And she actually, she was really nasty to us. And we could understand in one way, and in another way of course we were also very nervous on that time, and it was not a very easy, eh, time. And the only time what was pleasant was when Jo came home. He was actually in his, eh, um, his um, um, (mumbles to herself) his profession he was, he was in the, in the army. His occupation was, he was an officer in the Netherlands army, okay? And also, and the only pleasant time was when he came home at night and he came upstairs and talk a little to us. And, eh, (sigh) actually after a few weeks I can't remember how many weeks. I really don't know any more, I think maybe four, five weeks, or maybe it's three weeks, I really don't remember that any more. He found a place for us, eh, actually he forced it a little bit, he forced it to have a place for us. And that was in Meerkerk. Meerkerk is a (pause).

P: Would you spell all the names that you name, if you can.
(writing on paper)

VH: Meerkerk is ten kilometres from Gorinchem, and it is a very little village. Very, very small.

P: You said something that he forced you...

VH: Yes, I'll tell it for you.

P: Oh, okay, you will clarify it.

VH: Eh, those people had a son and this son was eighteen or nineteen, about that age, and he got a call. He had to, ah, (mumbles to herself)

P: Say it in Dutch and we will...

VH: To, eh, to, eh, eh he had to go to the work, to, he had to go

to Germany to work. He had to go to work camp in Germany.
Because they all called all the young people.

H: This eighteen-year old son?

VH: Ya, and that were non-Jewish people of course.

P: Ah ha. (in background - had to work in camps in Germany). So
tell us about this eighteen-year old young man.

VH: Yes, and so Jo told them, "If you take in those Jewish people,
we take your son and we hide your son, so he don't have to go
to Germany to work."

P: Ah, was this son, were they mobilizing young non-Jewish men
to...

VH: Right.

P: Forced labour to Netherlands?

VH: Right, right, absolutely, absolutely.

P: I see. So Jo promised this family that he would hide that
young man from the forced labour when they would take you in.

VH: Right.

P: I see. Okay.

VH: And, eh, and they agreed to it. And so early in the morning,
um, I think it was five or six o'clock in the morning.

P: Do you remember the, the, the date, the month?

VH: Oh no, absolutely not.

P: No. Maybe...

VH: Absolutely not.

P: Was it spring?

VH: It was spring, ya. Ya.

P: Spring of 1942, then.

VH: Ah, 1942, no. It was spring of 1943.

P: '43.

VH: It was spring of 1943.

P: Okay.

VH: 1943, let me see, 1942, I am married.

P: '43.

VH: Right.

P: Right, ya.

VH: That's 1943. And, ah, he got, we went with bicycle, he was on his bicycle, Jo was on his bicycle, and I sat on the back of him, on the bicycle. And he had another bicycle for my husband. So we drove there, it was only ten kilometre,...

P: At night, you mean, you drove?

VH: No, early in the morning.

P: In the day, early in the morning.

VH: Early in the morning. And when we came there at the, those people had an, an pub. A cafe, or pub, how you call it? In Holland you call it a cafe. And on top there were living quarters and we had one of those rooms. And we only were there once, spend there one night, and the next morning the 'mashersade', just like here the Royal, eh.

P: Police,...

VH: The mounted police came to them and they were good people, they were good mounted police, and they said: "Listen, we know the Germans come today in your home to look for your son, and every what you did with your son, of ever who is in your home, get rid of it, because they come today." So quick a phone call to Jo again and on the middle of the day, on the middle of the day, he came...

P: He?

VH: Jo came to pick us up. There was an extra bike again, I don't

know how he came on that extra bike there, but Albert, my husband, on one bike, on one bike and I again on the back of his bike, and we drove back to Gorinchem.

P: To...

VH: To Gorinchem.

P: To his own...

VH: No, no, no. Because in the meantime, in the meantime he know a person what would take us for money.

P: Oh, for money.

VH: For money.

P: That would hide us, hide you?

VH: That would hide my husband and me.

P: Um hm.

VH: We drove and we were about, I would say, one kilometre on the most from Gorinchem, and, and that is a dike, we were biking on a dike. A dike besides the water, right? High dike. And all of a sudden about, I would say one kilometre from Gorinchem, there were the Germans closing off the, the,...

H: The town?

VH: No, the dike, the dike, you couldn't go through. You have to show. We saw it, we saw it, we saw the Germans stand there and we did not want to risk his life, right?

P: Ya.

VH: So we said, "Jo go." I sprung from the, from the bike, my husband,...

P: You jumped off...

VH: I jumped off the bike, my husband put, eh, put, eh, bike down on the dike and Jo, and he said, "If we make it, we will find you by the railstation, if we make it." If we not you'll

never see us again, right? (laughter)

P: Ya.

VH: That's what we said. We went hill down of the dike and between the bushes and the wall we walked on to the railstation.

P: To the...

VH: To the railstation, to the [several people say - railway station] to the railway station. And, eh, after twenty minutes or so we, we came by the railstation, by the [railway] station, and Jo was there. Because we couldn't show our papers, we didn't have any papers, otherwise they would been...so that was our only chance, just to go there. And he was there, and he took us to a place and on that place, we were there for one year and seven months. And I can tell you, the only thing what keep us from going there was they never could find us in that house. They never ever could find us in that house. And I'll tell you the reason.

H: You mean the people who...

VH: The German came to, if the German came to, to look for somebody...

P: Search.

VH: To search for somebody, they would never have found us, never ever. And I also can tell you that there [were] seven children in that house, from three months to thirteen years, and they never have known in this one year and seven months that we were in that house. That was a house, it was so big and so old, it must be about sixteen hundred or seventeen hundred, I don't know. A big, big, big, big house, you could with a car drive through the hallway, so big. But it was

built so strange, it was built in a, in a street, in a normal street, but half of that house came out in another street. It was very, very, very strange. And they had the living quarters and everything in that house, but it was also a part in that house that was very old, old, old kitchen in, what they never used again. They had a normal kitchen, but that was an old kitchen what never were used any more. And in that kitchen, that kitchen came out on that other way from the house, you would never, you would never know there was a kitchen there, or something. And in that kitchen there were all...I'll show you what I mean, and maybe you get an idea.

P: Just, just hold it because we need to have your saga... [tape stopped - restarted] Duifje, eh, went into her present kitchen to describe the architecture of the kitchen and the deceptive double door of the cupboard in the kitchen which led to a winding staircase which was, ah, led to the attic where she and her husband were hiding. Okay, maybe you can repeat a little bit about it. (laughter) About the double, eh, cupboards...

VH: The, the, the cupboards were on both sides of the kitchen, only one side that were really cupboards and on the other side it was not a cupboard. When you opened the door it was a little staircase, but the staircase start not on the bottom, it started on the top, a very old and strange thing. And we put a double door in it, and, and before the door, eh, hang our clothes in, look like exactly like the other side. Like two cupboards. And nobody could get in there because on the inside, on the attic side, we had a lock on it. And so only we could open it, and from outside they couldn't come in. And

how did we know they were good people that brought us food or anything. How do we know it was not Germans? We had a sign when it was three times a knock on the door, we know it were the people what were hiding us. He knocked three times now we opened the door and he brought us food, and he brought us a pail for our 'behoeste', and for, you know...

P: A pail for going to the bathroom?

VH: To going to the bathroom, because there was nothing there. There was an attic and there was a little window in, but you know in Holland and in Europe, you would know, they had to put a black curtains for it. For, eh... (in background - black out).

H: Black out. Black out.

P: Because of the air raid.

VH: Right, right. And there was only a mattress on the floor, (pause) I can tell you that was it.

P: So this, this signal that, that these were the, the owners of the home...

VH: Right.

P: Was, ah...

VH: Three knocks on the door.

P: Three knocks on the door and then you would open it.

VH: Then we were safe to open that door.

P: Ya, okay. Thank you. I mean this is for the transcriber. (laughter)

VH: Okay, for that place we had to pay him every week fifty dollars. Fifty, eh, fifty guilder, guilder. That was without food. And I had, I just read this week a letter over from a friend of my father-in-law and he lived in Groningen, that is

with a train three hours away...

P: In north of Holland?

VH: Ya, in Groningen. And he...

H: How do you spell that?

VH: Eh, G-R-O-N-I-N-G-E-N.

P: Groningen.

VH: Right. And he was also a member from the Underground, he was an older man, he was in his sixties. And he, eh...make those fake food cards, he had a...

H: Ah, food ration cards.

VH: Ya, (everyone talking in background). He made...

P: False...

VH: Right.

P: Falsified, eh...

VH: Right. And he brought them every time. He came three hours with the train to bring those food cards for us.

P: For you?

VH: To have food.

P: I see.

VH: And some extras for those families, for those family. And, ah...

P: This is, Jo knew about that? Or Jo...

VH: Sure, sure...(pause)

P: Duifje is now showing us the cards through which the Dutch people could obtain food for children, for men, for women, ah, clothing and for heating and so on. What was the name of the man who supplied you with the food cards? Do you remember?

VH: Yes, very well, I would never forget that. He was a close friend of my father-in-law and he lived about three hours by

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train, and, ah, his name was Mr. Van der Woude, and...

H: Can you spell that. (in background - W-O-U-D-E-N)

VH: D-E (in background - D-E oh) Woude.

H: W-O-U-D-E.

VH: Right. (shuffling of paper)

P: Mr. van der Woude.

VH: Woude, van der Woude. And, um, and besides the food cards we had to come up with fifty guilder a week, but we of course not had. We left in the morning in our pyjamas, and somebody what [whom] we did not know [at] that time who did it, paid for us. (tape not clear). And um,...

P: And what was the name of the family?

VH: The name of that family was...

P: That you stayed with.

VH: Was van der Boor. 'Van der' like, like that, 'van der' and then B-O-O-R. And he was a shoemaker (long pause).

P: Did you know him before?

VH: No.

P: And you...

VH: I didn't know him.

P: He lived in your town, right?

VH: Was in my town. And he was taking money from us upstairs and he was, how you call it in English, collaborating downstairs with the Germans.

P: He was collaborating?

VH: Collaborating downstairs with the Germans. He took them in his house, he charged them money for making sure...I'm very thankful to him because he has saved my life. I can't say any other way, but he was a terrible, terrible person. Absolute

terrible.

P: Do you think that he might have collaborated with the Germans to cover up the fact...

VH: No.

P: That he was hiding Jews in the attic?

VH: He was only greedy. He was not a person what did it to save our life, he was a person what was greedy, greedy, greedy.

P: So um...

VH: I'll tell you later on then you will know. When the story goes farther I will tell you...

P: So someone must have paid for you to him, because you...

VH: Right.

P: Were penniless, is that so?

VH: Right, and that was that reverend, what paid for us. But I did not know by that time.

P: At that time. So he, the reverend, that was next door to you...

VH: Right, that were our neighbours, paid for us.

P: And he gave them every week fifty dollars, fifty guilders?

VH: Guilder, yes. And another funny thing I can tell you. Every night...

P: When you say funny...

VH: That's not so now.

P: Strange! Now its funny.

VH: It's not funny, it's terrible.

P: Then.

VH: Anyway, eh, every night by six o'clock or seven, I don't remember that exactly any more. Three knocks on our door, he took our pail, where we did our things what we, things that

nature do. And he brought us a pot with potatoes mashed with peas for one year and seven months (laughter) every night, the same thing. It doesn't matter, it was good, we survived on it. That he could have been a little nicer.

P: Mashed potatoes and peas.

VH: For one year and seven months, every day, every day, every day. But that was all right because we...

P: Was the food warm?

VH: Oh ya, ya, ya, I guess so. I don't even remember. You didn't even, you know you didn't even, you just hang on to try to save your life, that was all. And also, also, eh, because we felt so safe at that place. We felt so safe of [at] that place because we hear [had heard] that my brother, as a matter of fact, he was picked up already because they [had] found him in that, eh, in that, um, Turkish Consul. I mean they did, they went through houses and they looked for people.

P: Where did they find him?

VH: In this house they could not, ...ya my brother, yes.

P: Where did they find your brother?

VH: In the, ah, ah, in I, ah, you...

P: You already told this, ya, we have it on tape.

VH: Okay, so I, we found ourselves very safe there. And it must be very safe because if in one year and seven an, and seven months, none of the seven children knows we were there, then I must say that was a safe house.

P: This man had seven children of his own?

VH: Seven children of his own.

P: And none of them knew? And the wife didn't know either?

VH: The wife did know. Yes, the wife did know.

H: Oh wait, those children were his own children?
VH: Yes, were his own children.
H: Oh, I thought that they were other...
VH: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.
H: Oh!
VH: Were his own children and the youngest was at that time three months and the oldest was at that time thirteen years.
P: Oh, this is going, did you know? Oh, oh, ya.
H: Yes, okay, so.
VH: And in the time we were there his wife passed away...
P: While you were there?
VH: While we were there, and she contracted, ah, from the German soldiers brought over, ah, meningitis, is it meningitis?
P: Meningitis.
VH: Right. She contracted downstairs from the German people, from the German soldiers. And she died on it.
P: This is meningitis is a contagious disease.
VH: It is a very contagious...
P: And they couldn't find a helper?
VH: Ah, no, they was too late already before they know what it was, she was already gone.
P: Um, so did the situation change for you?
VH: No, no, no, the situation did not change at that time. Not at that time.
P: So you still received your food?
VH: Right, at that time. Till after we were there one year and seven months. Oh, oh, I'll just have to go a little back. In that street there were, ah, a few house and then there were the barracks from the soldiers, in that street.

H: For German soldiers?

P: Or Dutch soldiers?

VH: Eh, it used to be for the, eh, Dutch soldiers, by that time of course there were all German soldiers there. And, when we were there one year and seven months the English flew over and bombed the barracks. And, and we hear where we were in that attic the bombs falling and falling. We didn't know what was going on, we didn't know because we never came out. We never ever, ever have come out of that place. Never. We didn't know what was going on. Anyway that night after three knocks on the door, we opened the door, Mr. van der Boor was standing there, and said to us: "They bombed the whole street."

[END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1]

INTERVIEWEE: Duifje VAN HAREN (VH)

DATE OF RECORDING: March 31, 1992 and April 8, 1992

FILE NUMBER: 22-4

TRACK NUMBER: T2-S2

INTERVIEWERS: Renia Perel (P), & Reva Hollander (H)

VH: He said: "And the only house what still standing up is this house." He said: "And you have to get out in an half hour, if you don't get out, I shoot you and bury you here in my backyard." You got it? And...

P: Don't worry about her writing.

VH: And we said to him: "Where are you going with your children? He said: "We go to the farm." And my husband said: "Could we go with you to the farm?" He said: "No." And you must understand, not everybody in Holland was good, and after you be there for about two years away from the people and you didn't hear anything, you don't know any more who is good and who is not good. And we were in a situation, in an half hour we had to get out of that house and we didn't know where to go. And of course my husband what never lived before in Gorinchem didn't know anybody, and the only one I could think on [of], was this doctor, Dr Schöyer, and he was a Jewish doctor, (pause)...

H: This doctor is...

P: The doctor is spelt S-C-H-Ö-Y-E-R.

VH: And it has double ah...

P: Two dots...

VH: On the 'O'.

P: Umlaut over the 'O'.

- H: Now who, just to clarify again, who was this doctor again?
- VH: That was a Jewish doctor, who was married with a non-Jewish woman. And I knew, I knew that, that was before we already went under that they came to pick him up and he fled. And I also know and I don't know, I think I know the (tape not clear), I can't remember. True I know that, that after they had looked for him and couldn't find him, that he went back to his own house, and that he lived in his own house. So I said to my husband: "You know what Albert, I don't know where to go." Ik seg: [I said] "Let me try Dr. Schöyer." And that was about five minutes walk from where we were. I ring the bell.
- P: You actually left within a half hour?
- VH: Oh ya, oh absolutely, absolutely.
- P: He was so firm?
- VH: Oh, absolutely, and he would have done it, because I know the type. I know, he was, he was, and I will tell you.
(laughter)
- P: Was he angry because of the bombing?
- VH: Oh no, no, no, he wasn't angry because he didn't have anything on us any more, because he had to leave, he had to go to the farm and he couldn't make any money on us any more, right? That was his whole dingus [thing]. And that man he was (laugh) and that's not very nice of me to say, but he was in the front always from the Salvation Army, and singing away and I cannot stand the Salvation Army (laughter) any more, because he was so involved with them. And he was such a terrible person.
- P: So he was a two faced person pretending to be a good Christian

on the one hand...

VH: Right, right.

P: And then...

VH: Right.

P: Being...

VH: And it's not right for me, but I can't stand the Salvation Army any more (laughter), that's terrible.

P: It's not their fault and you that.

VH: That's right, (laughter) I know that, still the same. And, eh, and I ring the bell and, eh, Mrs. Schöyer opened the door, and I told her, "We have to get out in half an hour, we don't know where to go, maybe we can come in..."

P: You spoke to her?

VH: Ya. "Maybe we can come in your place or maybe you know a place for us to go..."

P: To hide?

VH: She said: "Come in, of course." She said: "If they find us, they find us all, and if we make it, we make it all." And...

P: Really!

VH: I tell you, I was in seven different places, but it was the only, only place they really did it to save our life.

P: They wanted you?

VH: They wanted to save our life. And they gave us a beautiful room, and we came from the, I don't know how you translate it, we said, "From the hel [hell] in the hemel [heaven]." From the, from the, we came from the most terrible place in [to] the most wonderful place. They couldn't do enough for us.

P: Now I'll stop you just there, interject, I could hardly wait to ask you this, is to describe for the future generations.

One day of the life of those seventeen, ah, actually nineteen months that you were in the attic. Could you just very briefly describe how you spent the day with your husband, what did you do, did you speak to him, did you have time to exercise or to stretch, did you ever sing? I mean, just, ah, some particular special day, if you can remember, in this seventeen, in the year and seven months.

VH: Yes. There was a little, little bang-a-ling from the dingus, a little bulb.

P: A what?

VH: A little bulb, a little light bulb.

H: A light bulb?

VH: A little light bulb. So we could read and...

P: What did you read? Where, did you have books there?

VH: Eh, those also we didn't know who brought it, but later on we know everything of course.

P: It's the priest probably sent you books.

VH: Sent books, brought, papers, brought the daily papers, not...

P: Newspapers?

VH: Not every day but, the whole bunch, you know. And, ah, that's maybe funny for you to see, too.

P: Now what does, ah, what are you showing to us?

VH: I showing a scrap book made out of papers and, out of daily papers, cut, cut outs, out of daily papers. As a matter of fact, here this page from Hitler, and, ah, eh, this picture from oil, eh,...

P: So this was one activity that you did with a scrapbook.

VH: That my husband not me...

P: That your husband did.

VH: Ya, ya. I had three or four of those.

P: And what did you do, because you...

VH: I read and I, uh, uh, well that's, that's mostly what I did, is reading, and I couldn't say no, not, actually...

P: That's it. Did you exercise ever, like?

VH: No, no, no, no, no, no.

P: You were too thin?

VH: I was, I was, I think I was eighty, eighty-seven or something, when I came out of the war. (laughter) Something like that, but that doesn't matter. Those things have never bothered me.

P: Uh ha, so...

VH: I have three or four of those books.

P: And, and, of course (pause).

VH: We really didn't want any children at that time.

P: Was your love for one another affected in any way by this traumatic situation, while you were in the attic?

VH: I think, I think when we didn't have each other, I think I would never have made it. I think I would never have made it. Yes, we were very, very, very close, always, our whole life. But I think when you go together through a time like this, I think after that you never, you never, eh, you have to be close. I mean it's no, no way around it. No way around it.

P: Isn't that beautiful to...

VH: Yes,...

P: To hear that...

VH: Yes, yes.

P: In the most poignant time of a tragedy...

VH: Uh huh.

P: That people are drawn together, that love gets you together.

VH: Yes. Hmhmm.

P: And how do you think it was for him, since he has now passed away? So how, how do you feel he felt? He felt the same way about you?

VH: Yes, oh yes, oh absolutely. Absolutely, yes.

P: Did you tell each other that you loved each other, or?

VH: Ah, I don't know if we told each other, but there was no, eh, what words say. You couldn't, eh, ah, you couldn't even think otherwise. I mean it was so, ah,...

P: Obvious?

VH: Obvious. It was so obvious.

P: Thank you.

VH: Also with my family, with my children. We were a very close family.

P: Uh huh. (pause) So did you have any other concerns about your relationship? Besides the survival.

VH: Eh, yes, because we didn't want to bring in time of war, children in this world, would be, eh, very unsafe for ourselves, but certainly you don't want to bring children in a war time in this world. You never know what is going to happen with you. And we...

P: So you abstained from getting, eh, eh...

VH: Absolutely.

P: From conception, from getting pregnant.

VH: Yes. Absolutely. (Pause)

P: And now perhaps we will return to your wonderful reception that you received at the doctor's house.

VH: And it was absolutely wonderful over there. But we got a repeat...

- P: What months was it, do you know now, or what year this... '44?
- VH: Ya, by that time it was 1944.
- P: The end of '44 or?
- VH: Yes. It was going to the end of, let me see. It was going to the end of 1944. Oh yes.
- P: So it wasn't winter yet, when you walked to the doctor's house, with your husband?
- VH: Yes, it was winter. It was winter, because in the winter from 1944 to the end of 1944.
- P: So, it would be about December maybe?
- VH: I would say, I would say, I really don't really remember those dates any more, but it must be, because...
- P: That's close.
- VH: Because what's, what's happened after that, it must be in end of 1944.
- P: So you still had a long way...
- VH: Now we get a repeat, we get a repeat from of, from our, eh, eh, from our, eh, stay at the family in Meerkerk. Der, Dr. Schöyer had adopted a son, they didn't have, ya they had a little son from themselves, too. But they had also an adopted son, eh, Peter, I think was his name. And...
- P: This couple, this doctor...
- VH: Yes, the doctor...
- P: And his wife had an adopted son, Peter?
- VH: Yes, had an adopted son, Peter, and Peter was about eighteen years old. And there we get a repeat. He, when we, in the time we were there six weeks, he got a call and have to go to the, eh, Germany work camp. And also this young man didn't want to go. But, for that reason it wasn't safe any more in

that house, because for sure the Germans and the Dutch people what were not so good, were coming to look in the house for them. So we had to get out.

P: So he was conscripted to go to the labour force in Germany?

VH: Oh ya, oh ya. They all, all young men they, they called them up. And that was in that time. And, so we had to...

P: And they weren't concerned that his adopted father might have been Jewish, or they didn't bother with this doctor?

VH: Oh, yes. We were all very concerned, we were just hiding away, he was hiding away in his own house.

P: I see.

VH: And he was very concerned, and we all were very concerned. And it was not safe any more in that house, because after you have a call and you don't go to the, eh, you don't, how we (not clear on tape).

P: Report.

VH: Don't report yourself, they come to you.

P: Ya. They come and get you.

VH: Then he said: "You know what?" He said to me...

P: Who? The doctor.

VH: The doctor. He said: "I have a sister." And the sister was also a mixed married. Of course, his sister was Jewish, but she was married with non-Jewish man. And they lived in Ymuiden. Ymuiden is on the water, on the...

P: Spell the name. (Sound of writing on paper). No, print it.
Y-M-U-I-D-E-N.

VH: One word.

P: It's one word?

VH: One word. Ymuiden is on the, on the North Sea, I guess, yes

on the North Sea, ya. It's on the North Sea. And all the people, the Dutch people, had to get away, had to evacuate from the, from the sea.

P: Away from the sea.

H: Evacuate!

VH: Evacuate from the sea. (in background - "It was a harbour.")
A harbour.

H: It was a harbour?

VH: Ya. (in background - "Ya, a harbour.") And because those were mixed married and she was Jewish, she also had false papers. Not good papers. Okay. And he said, and they lived on the, on the suburb from Gorinchem, just, just outside Gorinchem, just five minutes outside, around...

P: Your town?

VH: Ya.

P: Just a suburb...

VH: They were hiding there.

P: I see.

VH: Because they lived in Ymuiden, they were hiding, they were illegal over there.

P: Uh huh.

VH: And they have two little children. And till, till the last week, till the last week when we were by Dr. Schöyer, we got our food stamps from Mr. van der Woude. But by that time, just when we left, there was no transportation any more, it was nothing, he could not supply us with any food stamps any more. And for what he tried, he couldn't do it any more. It was impossible. Because it was impossible, we didn't have food stamps, and those people, the sister from Dr. Schöyer,

don't know the name any more...

P: Maybe you'll remember later. So you can add to it.

VH: Because that, they didn't have food for themselves, and not for the children, almost nothing for the children. So how could they take us in and supply us with food. They couldn't. They almost had nothing for the children, it was the last winter, it was the horrible winter, they couldn't. And all describe you the little house where they were in. It was a little house, I would say, a blue-collar little house...

P: Blue-collar worker, you mean?

VH: Right. House...

H: Just a minute. This is the house where this doctor's sister...

VH: Right, was hiding.

H: Was hiding.

VH: Was hiding with her husband and two children.

P: And now the three of you go there, or the four of you?

VH: No, no, no, no, no, no, just my husband...

P: Who is going there?

VH: Just my husband and me. Okay?

P: You are going to join the sister?

VH: Right. And we were one day and she said to me: "I would love to keep you, but we can't, we can't give you food, we haven't." And that was the truth, she couldn't. Now they were hiding in that little house, but downstairs in that house, lived another couple. And that couple was young married couple. Just married. I think she was not older as eighteen, nineteen years and he was about twenty-three years. Okay. And he worked for the government for food supply for

the people from Holland. They went, I would say, to the farms, taking the cows, slaughter the cows, and divided the food. Something like that. I don't know exactly...

P: A contingent maybe?

VH: I don't know exactly who it went, but he could have his hand on food. And was a very...

P: He has access to food?

VH: Access to food. And he was a very, and it was a very friendly couple. And they came upstairs and they said: "Well, we understand, you know what, come downstairs with us, we can, we can..."

P: Share?

VH: We can, we can get food enough, and you share and you can come at our place."

P: They invited you to eat there?

VH: The lady...

P: Or to give you...

VH: No, no, no, no to stay.

P: To stay!

VH: To stay at her place. She invited us, not he. He went along with it, but she invited us.

P: This nineteen-year-old girl?

VH: Eighteen, not nineteen years old girl. They were wonderful for us, they, they what they could do, but it was the most, most dangerous place where we have stayed. And for what reason? I going to tell you. That lady couldn't stay away from men.

P: Which lady?

VH: That lady what was so friendly.

- P: The nineteen-year-old?
- VH: The one what was just married.
- P: Oh, she was just married! I see.
- VH: She couldn't stay away from men. So she tried it with my husband, and she cannot fare, so she tried it with the German soldiers. And...
- P: When you say she tried it, but she didn't succeed, you mean?
- VH: But she succeeded with the German soldiers.
- P: I see.
- VH: And because her husband, her husband's name was also Jo, he had to go sometime for a week up to north to, ever what, it was his job. Right. And she took in German soldiers. And when she took in German soldiers, she do it, she did it only for sex, for nothing else. And not only that...
- P: And then you were there, in the next room.
- VH: And you must know that it was a little, little, little house. And you must also know, I looked that time, I was not a little darker, I looked very Jewish, my husband not at all. So, I couldn't, I couldn't walk around, I stayed in the little bedroom, was very little, little bedroom. But, there were all these German soldiers, always. And that wouldn't be, that's her business, was not my business, but she start in the evening getting parties with the German soldiers.
- P: She started to have?
- VH: Parties. And she drunk, and we were so afraid she would talk, that we were there in the house.
- P: She would start talking, oh.
- VH: We were so afraid and by that time it was already, eh, April, April 1945.

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P: Oh!

VH: So that was just, just...

P: The liberation...

VH: On the end, on the end, and we saw the liberation come and we were so afraid because,...

P: She could give you away.

VH: Ya.

P: I guess.

VH: Not, not on purpose.

P: But...

VH: In her stupidity, in her...

P: Because she was drunk.

VH: In her drunk [state of drunkenness]. Ya. So we were very, very afraid.

P: Oh.

VH: So what did we have to do? They whole...whole house was always full with German soldiers. And my husband, he had also a fake, a fake...

H: Passport?

VH: Eh, dingus, that he also was in, ah, eh by the food organization, eh, just like that man, and, eh, eh,...

P: A supplier of food, a distributor?

VH: Right, that he works for the government and so. He had those papers, and that we lived in, in, eh, that we lived there because we had those papers, false papers also, we had false names, and that we were bombed out of our house in "Nienmagen," and we had, our name was, my name was 'Truus de Graaf'...

H: Whoops, we didn't get that!

P: Oh, hold it, we have a lot of things to record now. Now please, ah, ah spell, eh, what your...

VH: Name was?

P: Was, name was, ya. Your document, what does it said. (pause - sound of writing)

VH: And my husband's name was (sound of writing) 'Tom Kroese'.

P: So you weren't even a couple?

VH: Kroese. (sound of paper being handed over)

P: Okay, so this is all one name?

VH: On the papers we were not.

H: Oh just a minute now. This was...

P: Duifje was 'Truus de Graff', T-R-U-U-S, D-E separate, G-R-A-A-F, and her husband's name was, 'Tom K-R-O-E-S-E'.

VH: Tom Kroese.

P: Okay.

VH: And because my husband did not look Jewish at all, and he had papers that he was a food inspector, and everything he used to stay in the room and talk to those German soldiers. Just for, just like friendly.

P: Like he would...

VH: And, and those, Germans, ninety-five per cent from the Ge..., from the Dutch people, wouldn't even look to them, would spit to them. And so if somebody talked to them, you could, you could understand how excited they were that somebody would talk to them. So he had, he talked to them and he was very friendly to them, and then, eh, they said: "Oh well, ah, why don't we see your wife never?" And then my husband said: "Well, she's very, very sick, she has a heart ailment and cannot come out of her bed." And by that time, every day they

brought wine, they brought everything, every day, because they loved my husband of course. Because that was one person what had conversation with them.

P: So this nineteen-year-old, eh, eh, girl, she's there too?

VH: Oh ya...

P: While they bring all these things?

VH: Oh ya, oh ya, oh ya, oh ya.

P: But she never gave you away, did she?

VH: No, no, no, no, no, she would never have done it on purpose.

P: No.

VH: She would never, because what she also did, she went with her, with her bra full of false papers to supply people. She was a good person, but she was, eh, I would say she was, ah, sexual meshugge. Because she was just married, that wonderful man.

P: Meshugge means "crazy" in Yiddish. (laughter)

VH: Ya. That was all. She was over-sexed. That was all what was wrong with it. She was, she was a good person, she was, eh, she would do everything to save your life.

P: So, so your husband became comfortable talking to them? Did they talk in Dutch or German?

VH: I think in, in...

P: In Dutch?

VH: I think so, I, I, I couldn't, that I couldn't tell you, I, I really don't know.

P: Ah ha.

VH: But one time, there were those just would have to go to Russia, and those were just young soldiers, but they were also real, those really S.S.'s, they had those real Nazis, those

real S.S.'s.

P: They came to the house?

VH: Oh yes. And one night my husband was talking and then he said to my husband: "Did you ever had Jewish friends?" And my husband said: "Well, not maybe friends, but I had some, some, eh, eh acquaintances and, eh, I know some Jewish people, and they were very nice." And then he said: "You bummer Hollander, if I can find one Jew I will kill her with my bare hands." And there my husband was sitting.

P: And he was listening to that?

VH: And one morning, I was in the very, that was a very, very, very cold winter. And it was snowing and it was cold, and they, German, those Germans soldiers, they know my husband was an inspector from the dingus. So and he was so nice...

P: For food?

VH: Ya. And he was so nice to those German (laugh) soldiers. They came in the morning, they rang the bell and said to my (laugh) husband: "Which direction you have to go this morning?" Because they want to give him a ride, because (laughter)... So my husband said: "What direction you have to go?" He said there and there. I couldn't say where. My husband said: "Oh 'sadder', I just have to go the other..."

P: The other way.

VH: The other way. (laughter) Because he never hide, he opened the door, he just, because nobody knows him anyway there, because he had never lived in Gorinchem. Anyway that was, I'm, that must have been in, in, in, eh, must have been in April.

P: 1945?

VH: 1945.

P: So now we're coming closer to...

VH: Now we are coming to the...

P: The Liberation...

VH: And we coming to...

P: To what?

VH: We are coming to the month of May.

P: Ah ha.

VH: And it was the 4th of May, you know the 5th was the liberation. The 4th of May we had to evacuate again.

P: You had to.

VH: Evacuate, we couldn't stay there.

P: Leave the place.

VH: We leave the place. Everybody had to what was there had to evacuate. The people too.

P: For a moment I've forgotten what the name of this couple was. Have you told us?

VH: No.

H: No.

P: And the nineteen-year-old, and the twenty-three-year-old. Do you remember?

VH: Jo, Jo, Jo, Jo, Jo it will come to me, but I don't know.

P: Okay, fine.

VH: As soon as I remember I will tell it you again, but I really, know, don't know any more.

P: That's fine. We will...

VH: They were lovely to us. I couldn't say anything else.

P: Okay. So the 4th of May 1945 just before the end, eh, of the war.

VH: The 4th, yes.

P: What happens?

VH: That whole part of Gorinchem had to evacuate again.

P: Oh, so this is still in the town that, that you were born.

VH: Ya, just, just. Ya, but just on the outside of Gorinchem.
They lived here.

P: Ya, on the outskirts.

VH: They lived here. Just on the outside of Gorinchem, you know?
And they had to evacuate again. The whole family, everybody
had to evacuate. Everybody...and...

P: Did the doctor's sister ever know about...

VH: Everybody had to evacuate.

P: I see.

VH: But for them it was not so bad. For the goyim they didn't do
anything on them. They only had to evacuate, but for us it
was bad.

P: Who was this a, ...order from the Nazi...

[END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 2]

INTERVIEWEE: Duifje VAN HAREN (VH)

DATE OF RECORDING: March 31, 1992 and April 8, 1992

FILE NUMBER: 22-4

TRACK NUMBER: T3-S1

INTERVIEWERS: Renia Perel (P), & Reva Hollander (H)

P: The last story refers to the place Nieuwe Hoven, spelled N-I-E-U-E-E H-O-V-E-N, and this is a suburb of Gorinchem where Duifje was born. And the name of the couple that she was staying with downstairs, of the doctor's sister, where the doctor's sister was also hiding was Betty and Jo Schuppen. In the same house now, Duifje has supplied us with the names of the couple that lived upstairs. It was Mr. and Mrs. van Waayen and the two children. This is the sister of the doctor. Thank you. That's for the transcription.

Okay, now you have to evacuate. You were talking about evacuation.

VH: Ya.

P: The evacuation isn't because you have to escape, to hide.

VH: No.

P: Is the evacuation because you have an order to evacuate?

VH: The whole part, the whole Nieuwe Hoven had to evacuate and we had to go over the river to the other side of the river. Of the other side of the Merwede. The river was the Merwede.

H: Do you want to spell that?

VH: M-E-R-W-E-D-E.

H: Okay.

VH: So Betty Schuppen said to me: "Don't worry, don't worry, I'll find somebody what can hide you." She said: "I know a doctor

here and he is good and I go to him and I ask what he can do." She went over to the doctor, Dr. Muurenbeeld (sound of writing). I think the doctor's name was 'Muurenbeeld'. Not too sure.

P: Oh, the doctor's name is close, the spelling is

M-U-U-R-E-N-B-E-E-L-D.

VH: And she went to him, and she told the stories, she told that she had two Jewish people in the house and what she had, that she would like to find a place where they are safe. And he said: "Don't worry." He said: "Is it dark, is it dark hair?" She said: "Yes!" He said: "Don't worry I'll send you over somebody that make her hair white, and then I come over and put her face in bandage, and I take her over the river with the Red Cross, with the patients from the Red Cross." That was the 4th of May. On two o'clock in the afternoon there came the young man what would make my hair white.

P: Blonde.

VH: Blonde.

P: Like bleached your hair?

VH: Bleached my hair. But it had to do all very quick, you know. The young man stopped in the house from Betty Schuppen and I look and yap, yap, yap, yap. What is his name? Jap, eh (sigh).

P: Trying to remember the name.

VH: Ya. Who I could very, very good because Gorinchem was, he was in my age, and, eh, Gorinchem, you know, little, little place, I know everybody and he knows me, I don't think even, I didn't know that he work for an illegal purposes, but he did.

P: For the Underground?

VH: Yes. So because he had to do it quick, I think he put so much bleach on my hair (Laugh) I was, in an half hour, white, but hair fell out (much laughter) later on. Anyway...

P: Showing her blonde hair. (laughter)

VH: Right. Then the doctor should come over later on to put the bandage on and take me away and take me over the river. But in between he came, in between,...anyway. In between he bleached my hair and in between Dr. Muurenbeeld should come, we listened to the radio, because you always listen in the basement, because you was not allowed to have a radio. And the liberation was there. We didn't have to rush over, we were liberated.

P: That was the moment of liberation?

VH: That was the moment. (laughter)

P: And you had your hair bleached. (much laughter) And the evacuation never took place?

VH: No, never took place. We were liberated.

P: Oh, (sigh)

VH: That was the evening before May the 5th.

P: That was the, was it announced, or by the Dutch radio?

VH: We, no, no, no, we listened, ya, we listened to the radio.

P: Ah ha. So no one moved? No, the neighbourhood didn't move?

VH: Oh ya, everybody was coming out of the houses, it was singing and dancing and, and there was very dingus still because were all over those German soldiers still, matter of weapons and everything. It was very, it was very stupid of us. Very stupid of us.

P: And the German soldiers were still among you, too?

- VH: All, all over the places, it was very, very dangerous.
- P: And they stopped shooting? Did they realize that the war was over? I mean that...
- VH: Oh, I, sure. So the next morning I was of course very curious of my brother had made it 'cause we have not heard from him in all those years, of course. That's the first thing in the morning I went to our home. What, would you could see how it looked like, so I looked through the whole home. There was no windows in the whole door. All the doors were not just, everything, you couldn't close it...
- P: Was damaged everything?
- VH: Oh, everything. Because the soldiers lived in the house and, and they had, they shoot from out our house. Our house was right on the, on the river. They shoot to the planes, so normally had 'upveer geskit', eh,...
- P: So they made it like a defence...
- VH: Right.
- P: Fort.
- VH: Right, right.
- P: Point.
- VH: Right. And so I went to the house and, in the morning, the first thing. And I went to my brother's house. And so we, I don't know if we met at my house or my father's house, or him house, I don't even remember that any more. But a very funny thing, and I don't know, I think I went naar [to] my house, no I think I went naar [to] my brother's house and I think my husband went to our house. Something like that, but I was not with my husband on that moment in the morning. And he bumped in our neighbours, the neighbours where we lived for thirty-

five years with, okay? And my husband...

P: This is the priest?

VH: No, no, no, no, the other one from the brewery.

P: Ah ha.

VH: From the brewery. What we gave everything what we had. And what my parents gave everything they had. Now you must understand this. My husband didn't know those people, because he was from another part of the land. And when my husband, ah, when he came to me or I came to him, I don't know, he said: "Delia, I have to tell you, you will find nothing, nothing back from what you gave to those people." And this I can swear was the first time that I got so angry at my husband, I said: "Albert,..."

P: You mean angry?

VH: Angry. I said: "Albert, hoe kan [how can] you say a thing like that? That are the best friends of my parents. We lived there for thirty-five year next. Hoe [how] can you say, you don't know them even? You come from another part. How can you say a thing like that?"

P: You told the, you talked to...

VH: To my husband. I said that to my husband. He was so right. I said: "I know for sure." They were shocked when they saw me. They couldn't understand how we had made it. They were shocked. Anyway he was so right.

P: In other words...

VH: Hard to understand.

P: You disbelieved that...

VH: Of course I did.

P: That these neighbours would deny, eh anything like that, is

that it? And he proved to be right, is that it?

VH: Yes.

P: How did you discover this?

VH: They told us, they said: "The Germans came here."

P: Did you go to him, to them?

VH: Sure, they lived side by side.

P: So you went to them?

VH: Yes,...

P: Next door?

VH: Sure. So then they said: "Sorry to say [to] you, but they took everything from you. The Germans took everything from you." And I look around in their house, and I said to them: "Tell me Mrs. de Kloe." de Kloe heisses her. (pause) "Tell me." I told them. "How could they take everything from us, and why didn't they take anything from you."

P: This was the family, de Kloe?

VH: de Kloe, ya.

P: D-E K-L-O-E, the neighbours on the other...

VH: Anyone. The answer you got was: "You should be happy that you have saved your life." That was the answer we got.

P: That's what they told you?

VH: That's what they told us. "You should be thankful that you have saved your life." [I said] "So I'm very thankful. Not thanks to you." And it was very funny...

P: And how did you feel?

VH: Another bad experience; I had two.

P: How did you feel? Like express your feelings, were you disappointed?

VH: I felt so disappointed I couldn't tell you. And from that

time on I wasn't, I, I didn't like people so much any more. I never know what to think of people. I never know if they were for real or if they were, or what they are or were two-faced, or whatever was.

P: You mean you didn't trust them as much?

VH: I still don't. It's bad to say, but it's true.

P: Because of that?

VH: Oh, absolutely, absolutely and to other things, too. To what I, in my father life.

P: Okay, so you were trying to say...

VH: Ya.

P: Like after the liberation.

VH: Ah.

P: And did they ever return any objects to you?

VH: Nothing. They sold it. They make just money out of it. That's all. Because that was what I want to say. I was walking one time, in the Headst was one main street, in the main street. And there was a jewellery store.

H: Jewellery?

VH: Jewellery store and now... (mumble), anyway, and I saw in the window. And this was a very funny thing because they never could say that was not mine. My grandfather, he died before the, before the war, he had a tobacco, eh, box for, eh, tobacco, a silver box. And after he died my father, eh, made some, eh, material in it, some velvet in it and put little foots under it and make for to put little spoons in. A little spoon box out of it. But there is one in the world, I can't believe there not be a second one, because it was made like that from a tobacst. And was standing in his window. So I

went up to the owner.

P: You went inside?

VH: Inside. And I asked to see that box, and I ask him: "Where did you get that?" And he answered me, I couldn't really, really, really not tell you any more what he answered me, more or less: "That's none of your business." More or less: "It's none of you business." I say well: "I think it is my business because it's mine." I said, "Can you tell me from whom you got it?" And I got the same, exactly the same answer what I got from those people: "Be happy to save your life." So after that I think not all the people in Holland were that good.

P: Uh hmm.

VH: That's what I think. And that's what I still and that's what I still think.

P: So they benefitted a lot from the Jewish...

VH: A lot, a lot have benefitted. A lot have benefitted.

P: And of course the buyer and the seller would be in, eh, in cahoots [i.e. partnership], that means protect one another. That's a slang.

VH: But then you know, I didn't really care. I, I, I, I did not really care, because I was so happy to have saved our life. And of course my brother's and my sister, my sister-in-law's.

P: Then you found out about your brother?

VH: Oh, yes the same morning. They came also the same morning. And, ah, and they had been...

P: And you found out about your parents too, that...

VH: Well, I did know that already.

P: You already knew that before?

VH: I know that, I know that.

P: That's right. The priest...

VH: And then, eh, my brother, he was very lucky. He had before the war and during the war, during the beginning of the war. He had a cosmetic store. Very nice, beautiful store. And it was his own building. And before he went under, hide himself, he had made in the attic a double wall and in the double wall, he put all things what was hardly [hard] to get and what was, eh, you know, like soap. You couldn't get any soap, or articles like that. He had put it all in between walls, and lots of things, I can't even remember what. And when he came out of the war, he opened that wall and everything was still there. And his house was still intact, all the furniture, everything was there because one of those high officers, had lived with his girl friend all those years in that house. And...

P: The German officer?

VH: Ya. Hadn't ruined anything or nothing. They, so he was very lucky. We came in our house what had nothing in it any more. Not even the, the, the water pipes were cut down and everything. (pause)

P: So you began a new life.

VH: We began a new life. And maybe that is also of interest of you. That six weeks after the liberation, there was in the paper, a big announcement that there were so many Jewish children, the parents had given away to non-Jewish people to hide them, and now all those kids were there, but most of those parents were, didn't come back, were dead. So my husband and me, we decided we were very thankful that we made

it, we should, I think for that we should take one of those children.

P: Um hum.

VH: We were that time, there was no transportation still in Holland, or nothing. And there, there office, it was OPK, "Orloefs plyf kinderen"...

P: I beg your pardon?

VH: War orphans, war orphans...

P: Oh, war orphans, yes.

VH: Childrens. Ah, their office was in Amsterdam and I said to my husband: "I go to Amsterdam, I want a child." There was no transportation and Holland was, and Amsterdam was eighty-five kilometres. I said: "I go and walk." So that's what I did.

P: You walked!

VH: I walked. With half a way I got a ride from some German, from not German, from Canadian, eh, soldiers. And I know I arrived on, on I think twelve or one o'clock in the night. I arrived there, but the office was closed and it was in a big building and there was an, an, 'Hoe noem hem?' A conciege, a janitor, not a janitor, yes something like a janitor or something. And he told me...

P: A door man?

VH: Something like that, and he said, well he said: The, the, the..."There is a lawyer she live here, right across in her house and she is the head from OPK and those war orphans." She organized it. I said...

P: You said OPK, what does that mean?

VH: Oerlofs Plyf Kinder, War Orphan Children.

P: And what's the, spell the, um, abbreviation of it.

VH: O-P-K.

P: O-P-K and it's orphan...?

VH: Ya, no war, war, war. For the 'O' is war.

P: War...

VH: Orphans (mumbling in background - 'society' of something).

P: Orphans, what does that 'K'...

VH: Children.

P: 'Kinder', children, oh children. (writing). This is, was the lawyer for the OPK. She means abbreviation - "War Orphan Children."

VH: Ya. He said: "You, you should go across the street." At that's where she lived. But it was twelve o'clock or one o'clock in the night. Ik zeg [I said]: "Well, I cannot go there at this time from the night to..." He said: "Yes you can because you cannot get a hotel, because every hotel is occupied by the Canadian soldiers." So I thought, "Well, what can happen." I rang on and there was a lady, and she was a lawyer, and she was, and she was so nice. She was so nice, I cannot tell you. And I stayed at her place that night, and the next morning...

P: She accepted you?

VH: Oh, yes.

P: And she let you stay over night?

VH: Yes. And the next morning, she met me on ten o'clock or eleven o'clock, I can't remember, nine o'clock, in her office. And she interviewed me. And then she asked me a lots of questions, and she said: "What is the reason you want a child? Can't you have children from your own? Or for what is your reason?" And I said: "I don't know if I can get

children of my own." (laugh)

P: Did you try?

VH: (tape not clear) I said: "But my reason is that my husband and me, we made it through the war and we are very, very thankful, and I think, I think if I had had children and I was not coming back out of the war, I would be very thankful if some Jewish family took one of my children." I said: "And that's my only reason." So, and of course she interviewed me further and everything else, and she said: "Well, you will hear further from us." Right. And I didn't know, but I was the first one what asked for a child in Holland. And, anyway to make the long story short, it took another year before I had one.

P: Oh, had one of your own?

VH: No, before I had an OPK child.

P: Oh.

VH: It took a year before I got one.

P: Oh, before you got a child!

VH: Ya. In the meantime I had a child from myself already.
(laughter)

P: I see. You were pregnant right away?

VH: Ah, ya, shortly. And, eh, and when I got him...

P: What did you get? When was that?

VH: A boy, and that was the 9th of November, on his birthday, and he was at that day six years old. And, eh, of course, he's now fifty-two. (laughter)

P: So this is your adopted...

VH: That's right, he was my adopted one, ya.

P: Okay, so let, eh, um. So your adopted son, what's his name?

VH: Max Kool. (shuffling of paper and writing)
P: And he was born?
VH: He was born 1940, 9th of November 1940.
P: And you got him a year after you applied?
VH: After a lot, and a lot, and a lot of difficulties to get him, even.
P: And what about you, you, you were pregnant and you had one of your own as well?
VH: By the time, by the time we got him, (mumbling in background - 'die ander') by the time we got him, yes, eh, I had Emmy already. I, Emmy was three months when, eh...
P: When you got Max?
VH: When I got Max, Emmy was three months.
P: And this was a boy, too?
VH: No, I got a girl.
P: And when was she born?
VH: She was born March the 1st.
P: March...
VH: 1st.
P: 1st? 1945?
VH: '46.
P: '46.
VH: 1946.
P: And her name is, was?
VH: Emmy Betty Henriette Van Haren. (laughter)
P: You named her after your mom?
VH: I named, no, I...
P: Emmy, you had many names to name that...
VH: Emmy, that was my mother's name and my husband's mother's

name. They were both Emmy [and] Betty, that was the name of my step-mother, because I loved her very, very much. And Henriette, [long pause - with noise] that was the name of my sister-in-law. The wife of my oldest brother what came away.

P: So now you have a boy and a girl.

VH: Now I have a boy and a girl.

P: And how many more children did you have since?

VH: I, I, I had in three and a half years, four children.
(laughter) Included my son, my adopted son.

P: So do you want to name all your children?

VH: Sure.

P: Their birth and their, just spell it out if you like, to the, okay. The 10th of July, what year?

VH: '47.

P: '47 was... N-A-N-C-Y G-O-R-G-E-T-T-E

VH: Nancy Gorgette.

P: Ah, no this was 'Nancy'.

VH: Nancy Gorgette.

P: Nancy Gorgette.

VH: And dan [then] I got...

P: That's another girl.

VH: May 2nd '49

P: '49, May 2nd 1949, you had R-E-N-E M-A-R-C-E-L, that's a boy.

VH: That's a boy. So now I have two boys and two girls.

P: Ah, beautiful.

VH: Yes, it is.

P: And, uhm...

VH: And now I have nine grandchildren, too. (laughter)

P: Are they all now in Vancouver?

VH: No. Max is still in um, in um Edmonton and the other three are in Vancouver.

P: Ah, so, but they are all in Canada?

VH: They're all in Canada. They all...

P: How many grandchildren do you have now?

VH: Nine.

P: Nine grandchildren. How many boys and girls?

VH: Seven boys and two girls.

P: When they all get married, they'll even out.

VH: (Laughter) Hope so.

P: Then um, they were all born in Amsterdam, or?

VH: Gorinchem, all in Gorinchem.

P: Where did you live?

VH: Gorinchem.

P: Oh!

VH: I went back in the house. I went back in.

P: Oh, you went and you fixed the house?

VH: Yes, and we fixed the house. And, ah...

P: How did the relationship with the neighbours like, ah a...

VH: Not good.

P: Humm?

VH: Not good. I couldn't stand those people, I, I, I, I. This was on the one side, on the other side was just wonderful.

P: Umhmm. And when did you leave Holland?

VH: 1953.

P: And why?

VH: Why? Um, one simple reason. The Korean War started and I was so nervous and so afraid that I'll get again. Over again. I didn't want to stay.

P: And how would that have anything to do with Holland, the Korean War? How did you visualize that?

VH: Because, I was afraid of war. Every what it was, they said never the German would never come to Holland. Everything. And another thing. There was also another thing. All those families in Gorinchem, they were almost all, I would say all of them were one way or another way family related to each other. And nobody...

P: To family related to...

VH: To each other.

P: Ah ha.

VH: You know, they're all family of each other. And almost nobody came back. And when you walked in a little city and you go by, in the one street and the house here lived some family from you and there. And they didn't came back, and they didn't came back. I always was very nervous. I was never, never the same. I was very, you know. And if you, if somebody talked about war or something, I wouldn't want to stay. And my brother didn't want to stay. And my, that man what were by my brother stay first, and I later on, for a few weeks. That Jo Hache, he had a daughter and his daughter was seventeen, at that time. And she got, eh, um, she came, became engaged to a Canadian soldier. And they got married.

[END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 1]

INTERVIEWEE: Duifje VAN HAREN (VH)

DATE OF RECORDING: March 31, 1992 and April 8, 1992

FILE NUMBER: 22-4

TRACK NUMBER: T3-S2

INTERVIEWERS: Renia Perel (P), & Reva Hollander (H)

P: Continuing the interview with Duifje. Okay, so now that Jo's daughter is married to the Canadian soldier.

VH: Ya. And so my brother didn't want to stay in Holland either, any more. And he contacted, ah, those people. Hetty was her name. I don't know what his name was, I can't remember the names.

H: How did you spell that?

VH: Hetty, H-E-T-T-Y. I must have the names somewhere here in the house. Anyway, and they sponsored my brother and his wife and their daughter to Canada. Because by that time you couldn't take any money out of Netherlands and you had to be sponsored. Somebody had to be responsible for five year for you.

P: That was in '52?

VH: That was in '52, ya. And we, at the same time, applied for New Zealand. And there was one Jewish family what came back in Holland, what came back in Gorinchem and that were a very close friend. He was a very close friend of my husband and she was a very close friend of me. And they had also four children and we would go together to New Zealand. Because she had a brother over there. Now you must know, that friend from my husband, that, those people, he was a young man, but he was almost blind and they couldn't repair his eyes. After he applied, after four or six weeks or a few months, I can't

remember the time. I really can't remember the time. But they um...

P: Were rejected?

VH: Were rejected.

P: By the New Zealand consulate.

VH: And I thought, I thought, I wouldn't want to tell it, but I really thought it was because...

P: Of his eye sight!

VH: Of his eyes. And, but we didn't get any answers still to that. So, in the meantime, we had very good business, in the meantime build up a very good business in wholesale...

P: What kind of business?

VH: In um, um, (not clear on tape) baby clothes, (not clear) and um, woollen, eh (not clear).

P: Baby clothing?

VH: Baby clothing and lady's stuff, eh, sweaters and, um, bathing suits. Everything knitted, eh, knitted wear. It was a very...in wholesale. Very good wholesale. So my husband thought we would go anyway, so we tried to sell our business. And we advertised our business and we found somebody what wanted to buy our business. And, but we still did not had a way of...but we were so sure that we would go. So we sold, like in the meantime you must know we had four little children. The oldest was Maxi, [he] was twelve and the youngest was Rene, he was three and a half. And my husband, he was a very good businessman, but that was all he could do. He had two left hands, he couldn't work and he had no, not a profession or anything. Couldn't speak a word English, this he was um...

P: Excuse me, when you said here, he had two left hands did you mean by any chance that he wasn't a handyman?

VH: Right. (laughter) He called it two left hands.

P: Tell it to the transcriber.

VH: (laughter) And so, we sold our business on the, eh, um, mit um, (words spoken in Dutch). We sold the business on that person, but...

P: Oh, you sold it to someone?

VH: We sold it to someone, but with the dingus, if we were not accepted...

P: Then you buy it back.

VH: That we could buy it back and also if we were accepted, at the first year when we were in New Zealand and we couldn't make it, that we could buy half of our business back.

P: So you had a contract, with that person?

VH: Right. Anyway the man took it over, and also our house, and we moved in the meantime we bought another house in the middle of the woods. Very nice, lovely. But, in the meantime there came a dingus and we were rejected.

P: Oh, there came the rejection for you too.

VH: (laughter) For us.

P: From New Zealand?

VH: From New Zealand. And with the reason, they don't want families with four children. But, we hear later on, of that later on we hear at the same time, from that brother from my, from our friends, what had people there in the government, what know very (not clear) they didn't want a Jews over there.

P: They didn't to, Jews in New Zealand.

VH: That's right.

P: So that's why you were rejected?

VH: In the meantime, my brother was accepted in Canada. So he wrote: "So Dalia why don't you come over to Canada and we sponsor you, and come over to Canada?" And we found it a very good idea. I didn't like to go in a cold climate, but, ah, anyway I didn't want to stay in Holland either. And I liked to go where my brother was, so. But in the meantime the man what bought our, our um, business...

P: Your property and your business?

VH: Our business over, he said: "Listen I like this business very much and I think you are all, if you are not accepted, you always can make your living anyway, why can I just under any dingus keep that business and..." When we were rejected in dingus, we want to, we want to buy half of our business back and he said: "I rather keep it myself, by myself." And we agreed on it. We came to an agreement and anyway, but on later on we were accepted here in Canada and well we had sold that and everything turned out all right anyway.

P: So you sold the business?

VH: We sold the business.

P: And you re-arranged the contract?

VH: Right, right, right, right.

P: So you agreed to let them have the whole thing?

VH: Right, right, right, right.

P: And you came to Canada. So you came in 1953 or 1954?

VH: 1953, Ya.

P: What month was that?

VH: In, eh, June I guess, June ya, June, ya in June.

P: So did you come straight to Victoria or?

VH: No, no, no, no we went to at Edmonton, because my brother was in Edmonton.

P: I see. That's where this, ah, girl married?

VH: Right, right. Ya. I don't know the name any more, I can find the name somewhere. I have it here.

P: Well, it's Jo's daughter so we know.

VH: Right, ya (laughter).

P: Okay.

VH: And then I came in Edmonton and I tell you, my brother, when he, when he immigrated, he took a pre-fab home with him, because you couldn't take any money with you. So we took a house with him.

P: Oh, a pre-fabricated home!

VH: Home.

P: From Holland?

VH: From Holland. And so were we planning to do, but ours didn't turn out. But anyway, that was another story. But, eh, anyway, but he had his home. But he had to build it on the um, on the outskirts from Edmonton. Now I'm telling you, the outskirts from Edmonton, it had... We came in June and it had rained for six weeks, before we came. And where they put up their house, there were no streets still, and it was all mud, mud. And when we came there, there were, the, the, the laundry hanging out, outside and I thought I came in a, in a Gypsy camp. And I could cry, I could just turn around and go back with my four children. I didn't know where I came. I was, I found it terrible. I, and I...

P: You were disappointed with the environment?

VH: I was so disappointed, so disappointed.

P: He didn't write you that he...

VH: No, he didn't write. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, he didn't write anything about that.

P: Because he wanted you to come?

VH: Right. And I hated Edmonton from after first day tot [till] the last day I lived there. I lived only for one and a half year, then we moved to Calgary.

P: Why? Did you not like the climate?

VH: Well, I didn't like the climate in Calgary, too, but I didn't like Edmonton. It was something, it was so disappointed in it. I, I, I just hated the town. I just hated it with a passion. And, and actually everything went wrong the first three months. Everything what we did went wrong.

P: What does that mean?

VH: What it mean, it does...

P: In short.

VH: What it mean that we were very bad people, that you couldn't take money out Holland, and we did it anyway.

P: The people you sold to, you couldn't get the money?

VH: No, you had to leave it in Holland. You could not take it out. You could take out I think three...

P: But you could have it in the bank in Holland?

VH: Sure, but what, what do you think. When you come with four children and you don't know the language and you don't have no any profession and you come without money. You think that's easy? When you had the good life in Holland. It's very scary. So, we ordered a pre-fab home to take with us, but the man went broke and we never saw our home. Right. Then we got an address to take our money out Holland through Switzerland.

Anyway the money still have to come. We never got the money.

P: You still didn't get the money, to this day?

VH: And that...No, never got it. And we could do nothing because we were not allowed to take it out. And I'll tell you the men, the men what did it, and we took two big, big containers with everything, all our furniture, carpets and everything what you could of think we took with us. I took for all the kids clothes for four years and anything.

P: And you didn't get it?

VH: And the man what came and what would make...Ya, the containers we got. What the man what came, to, to, to get our money to Switzerland came to our house and that man was smarter than we were because when he came...I didn't trust the man, I don't know what it was, I had a feeling that man was no good. I had the feeling. And that man he notice it on me. I think he notice it on me, that I didn't trust him, and he said to my husband: "You know what Mr. van Haren, you know what you do, you give me ten thousand dollar and I make it over to the bank in Edmonton and then you receive that ten thousand dollar, you gave the rest of your money to some friends of your and if you receive that ten thousand dollar, than you let your friend give me the rest of your money and...So when we came in, in Edmonton, of course that ten thousand dollar was there, of course. But the rest still have to come. (laughter) And we could do nothing on it, because we were not allowed to take it. We couldn't do, we couldn't do anything...

P: This is the law of the country?

VH: We wrote and we wrote on him. He just laughed.

P: You mean this is the Edmonton man, or?

VH: No. That's the man in Amsterdam.

P: Oh.

H: How was he going to take the money from Holland into Switzerland?

VH: I don't know if he did it himself, but we got a recommendation from somebody else and somebody else said he got the money and, eh, every what, we never got it.

P: To this day you didn't get the money for your business and for your house?

VH: No. And our, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, only that ten thousand dollars with four children.

P: Well, is there evidence anywhere in Holland that someone received that money?

VH: No. And you know what? I was so scared, I was so scared, with those four little children, and don't know what, we didn't know what to do. We didn't know how to make money or every what. And you know what my husband his answer was to me? He said: "You should be ashamed of yourself, didn't you lose more as money?" He meant we lost our whole family. "Didn't you lose more as money, if it, I will make it again." He did.

P: He preferred to lose money than to lose the life, is that?

VH: He said: "Why did I, why was I worried, or why, why was I upset about it, that I didn't have the money." It was sad enough that we had to lose all the, all of our family and, and what is money against, eh, eh, a life, people's life [lives]. What we had lost. We had lost more as money.

P: Well, he had a philosophy, a right attitude.

VH: He had a beautiful, he had a beautiful philosophy.

P: Right attitude.

VH: Right.

P: So eventually you left from Edmonton and you moved to?

VH: Eventually that was also (laughter) ended and maybe nothing to do with that any more, right. Eventually we bought a little grocery store...

P: In Edmonton?

VH: In Edmonton, and a little one, and we were there in from the morning seven tot [till] nights, eleven, including the Sunday, and we couldn't even make it. We couldn't even make it. And tot [till] one day there was about six weeks later when we opened up, six weeks or seven weeks later. There stopped a little car in front of our store and there came a man, and he was a Dutchman. And he came to sell us products from Holland. A products, food products, food products what I would say every Dutch people have on the table. Like Dutch cheese, Dutch rusks, Dutch, eh, anyway. And he would sell us.

P: An importer.

VH: An importer. And he worked for his nephew in Toronto and they send him to West Canada to build up a business. And we said: "Listen mister, you are on the wrong address because we cannot even sell, eh, Canadian stuff, let stand Dutch stuff." And the trouble also was, we didn't know anything from districts. And it was an absolutely, completely Ukrainian district. And the owner why we bought it from, he was a Ukrainian, and when the people came in he was...and he talked in Ukrainian and when we came in, we couldn't talk Ukrainian, (laughter) but we couldn't talk English too. Instead of building up the business, we came down. So we said to that man: "Listen, you

can't sell us anything, because we cannot even, and we are going broke in this business and we have to close it up." And then he said: "Listen." He said: "Please I have to make a living too, and I, my nephew sent me, let me put it on your shelves, you don't have to pay it and if you don't sell it, I'll take it back. And if you sell it, you pay me after you sell it."

P: Oh, on consignment?

VH: Ya, well what could you say. Now I'm very handy with my hands, that's my only handy thing. And there was a little window in, and I put that stuff in the window. Not knowing that also in that district, a lots and a lots of Dutch people lived. And I swear, it was not even an hour in the window, if I sold everything what I had in that store. Everything from those Dutch articles. So my husband took his bike, because we took our bike also to dingus, went to that guy, paid him what we had, took some new stuff. He did that for maybe two, three weeks and dan [then] he said: "Am I crazy, I fly to Holland, what he can (laughter) I can do the same thing." So we became an importer. But the food we mostly bought from him, because he held agencies what you couldn't get your hands on.

P: Then he had exclusive...

VH: Exclusive agencies. And so we started in gift wear, in under wear, the food from him and, ah,...I don't know.

P: So you imported things from Holland?

VH: Everything, records, books, you couldn't tell it from Holland. Everything from Holland. But, then people started to come in and say: "Don't you have stuff from Germany?" or "Don't you have that from Italy?" or "Don't you have stuff from Denmark?"

All those immigrants came in. And everything when they came in, I wrote it down. I wrote exactly down what they wanted. And when I had enough of those things, I make sure we got it, some way or an other way. And then, ...and that this stuff that went like that. And then we, we...you have to go?

P: No, we, if it's, we will finish, we will give ourselves another twenty minutes.

H: Okay.

VH: And then we said to our Dutch customers. They were all those really Christian people what go to the, the Church, those, those, those reform, those, those, ah, real religious things. He said: "Is not, eh, um a Church paper?" They said: "Yes" And then we asked: "Where is your Reverend?" And so we contacted the Reverend and we asked on him if we could put an ad in his paper, in his Church paper. And he said: "Oh no, that is Church paper, that's not for business." So my husband said: "Well, I'll make you a deal. The printing, I pay, the posters, I pay, I pay everything for you, if I can put an ad in the paper." And of course he went for it. (laugh) And on every people what came in I wrote their address down, their names down, their address down, we make advertising. And then after, I think after three months, we opened up a second store. (laughter) And then after a year we, and we worked really hard. One week, eh, I was in that one store and my husband in the other store, and once a week we changed around and then I make in the other store a new windows and cleaned it and so. And then after a year, we became, we became very good friends with that Dutch man what came, eh, what, what sold us the first stuff. And then after a year, a good year,

was almost one and a half year, he said: "Now" he said: "You are my guest, I'll take you out to Banff, you close up for two days, and, and, and you go...back." So we went to Banff, it was the first, first day we took off. We went to Banff, and you come through Calgary, (tape not clear). My husband look around, he said: "That's a little nice place, I wouldn't mind to open a store here." So we went to Banff, and we had two lovely days, and then on the way back, he said to that man, he said: "At, you take Dalia home, I stay here, I going to see if I can rent a store here." And, ah, he said: "Oh no, we went out together, we come home together. So if you stay, we stay too." So, we stayed and, eh, we got, we rented a store there. And I was afraid, because that time, 1955, a store for six hundred dollar rent, was very high, that time. And I said to my husband: "Why would we do that? We make a good living now and maybe what we make on this, I think we will lose it, that's irrelevant to it." He didn't listen, he (laughter) did it anyway. So we, then we moved to Calgary, and we put manager in that store and, ah, and I run, we opened some more stores. And did a little wholesale.

P: What was the name of your store?

VH: First that was, eh, 'The Holland Shop', but then later we changed the name in European Imports.

P: What?

VH: European Imports.

P: European Imports. First it was The Holland Shop.

VH: Because we started to import from all countries.

P: Um hum. And then from, from Calgary, how long did you live in Calgary?

VH: Twenty years.

P: Oh, so you are a Calgarian. (laughter)

VH: Twenty years.

P: And how long did you live in Victoria? You were telling me earlier?

VH: Eighteen years. Eighteen years. When we retired, we retired and then we moved to Victoria.

P: Uh ha. So, did you have stores in Victoria as well?

VH: Oh no, we retired when we went to Victoria.

P: Oh, you retired.

VH: We got rid of everything. We sold out everything.

P: You sold everything?

VH: Ya.

P: You didn't get rid of it.

VH: We sold everything.

P: So eighteen years in retirement must have been very pleasant?

VH: Oh, it was wonderful. Oh was wonderful. We loved it. We travelled a lot, and er, we had...

P: And your children grew up by then, and were educated.

VH: Ya.

P: And when did you move to Vancouver?

VH: Two and a half years ago.

P: Oh. So you've lived in British Columbia for twenty years, over twenty.

VH: Ya, ya, ya.

H: When did you move to Victoria again?

VH: Ah.

P: Eighteen years, eh twenty and a half years ago.

VH: I was...

P: So, in 1972, when you retired?

VH: Let me see. When my husband was (pause) fifty-five. It's nineteen, nineteen years ago.

P: She said, 1971.

VH: 1971.

P: '71.

VH: Ya, it must be '71.

P: I was one year out.

VH: Ya, '71 I guess.

P: Okay. So, and, eh, your husband is, when, when did he pass away?

VH: He passed...

P: When did he die?

VH: He, eh, on November the 18th, 1980.

P: 1980. And where is he buried?

VH: In Victoria.

P: Ah ha. At the Jewish cemetery.

VH: Ya, of course.

P: Do you go visit some times?

VH: Oh ya. Ya. I go next week.

P: Uh ha. You were there!

VH: Ya.

P: And what do you do now? In your retirement home, it's a beautiful home.

VH: A lots of embroidery. That's what I love. I can do that for the whole day.

P: Handy work, handy crafts, embroidery, and what else?

VH: That's all.

P: Uh ha.

VH: That's all. And I read.

P: I saw some of your work before and we took some pictures.
(Talking in background - Did you see the tablecloth she is making?) Beautiful. And do you visit with your children?

VH: Oh ya.

P: A lot?

VH: A lot, ya, ya.

P: And do you do any other volunteer work at all? For the community?

VH: I did it, I had first I did it after my husband passed away. I didn't know what to do with myself, and I went to the Royal Hospital in, eh, Victoria. And I volunteered.

P: The Jubilee, or?

VH: The Jubilee, ya, the Jubilee. And I volunteered there. And I once a week I went to the, ah, to the gift shop from the museum. And then I travelled a lot.

P: And when you moved to Richmond, what, what, eh, are you doing any volunteer work now.

VH: Nothing. At the moment I do nothing. I'm ashamed of myself, but I do nothing. I'm so lazy. (laughter)

P: Well, maybe you need a time to reflect.

VH: I don't know. The days go by, and I don't know. For the winter I always go away for three months. And, eh, I don't know. And then I come back and, ah...

P: Are you enjoying your life though? Your retirement?

VH: Yes. Yes, very much so. I'm only sorry my husband couldn't make that. That's why.

P: Do you have a social life at all?

VH: Yes, I have nice friends. I have very nice friends, and I

have a lots of friends in Hawaii and, ah, and ah, I have very nice friends here, and my kids. And the friends of my kids. (laughter) And, ah, ya, I have very nice life. Very good life. (In the background - "And she got me.")

P: She got you! Would you introduce yourself? One moment please,

IG: I'm Isaac Gokkes, I'm Dutch, too.

H: Could you spell your name?

IG: My name is Isaac and dan [then] Gokkes, that is G-O-K-K-E-S.

H: And how do you spell Isaac?

IG: I-S-A-A-C. I'm a very good friend from Dalia or Duifje. I come from Holland, but I come from Amsterdam. So we met each other and we're very good friends.

P: They spending time together? Keeping each other company?

IG: That's right. We go together to Hawaii and other places, that is all.

P: Well, thank you.

IG: You're welcome.

P: So in looking back, you said that you wanted, that you mention, the day of the Nazi invasion and could you briefly say something about that day? What happened when the Nazis invaded your town?

VH: I wasn't there (laughter). Invaded my town, I wasn't there, but it was a very sad, sad day, because eh, eh...

P: You mentioned something before about people...

VH: There were an family with three...

P: Committing suicide.

VH: Three children, shoot his three children, himself and his wife, because...

P: Who were these, who is this family?

VH: Meyer North. He was afraid because he did not think the Germans could take in Holland that quick. They, they couldn't do it, he thought. And he pointed out um, somebody or so, all the not good, the "Annesbui", the, the, the [mumbling in background] the people what coller, coller...

P: Collaborated?

VH: Collaborated with the Germans, he pointed them out. Of course, he know when they really invaded they would pick him up right away. And before they did that, he killed himself, and his children, first day from the war.

P: So he committed suicide or he was taken away?

VH: No, no, no, no. Suicide.

P: Was his wife and children...

VH: He shoot his three children, his wife and himself.

P: This part of the story belongs to an earlier tape when Duifje talks about the Nazi invasion this I am referring to the transcriber perhaps you can place it in the right context. Thank you. And the reason that you mentioned this, is because of the impact the invasion had, is that it?

VH: Ya. Hmhmm.

P: Thank you. So now...All I want to...

[END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 2]

INTERVIEWEE: Duifje VAN HAREN (VH)

DATE OF RECORDING: March 31, 1992 and April 8, 1992

FILE NUMBER: 22-4

TRACK NUMBER: T4-S1

INTERVIEWERS: Renia Perel (P), & Reva Hollander (H)

P: This is the concluding statement that Duifje wants to bring some points up.

VH: Ya, I want to mention something what I think lots about lately. And it was about ten months after the liberation. And we were for a few days, my husband and me were for a few days in a little resort place for a few holiday, for a few days holiday. And we sat outside on a little table, had some coffee and next to us was a table and there was a gentleman and a lady sitting. And, eh, I could recognise right away that it were Jewish people, and we start talking, and then we introduce ourselves. And I was about, I would say seven, eight months pregnant, from my first baby. And all of a sudden, that lady said to me: "How could you do that?" And she repeated: "How could you do that?" And I didn't understand what she meant. And I ask her: "What do you mean?" And she said to me: "How could you bring an other self in this world?" And later on I really understand it, because, eh, they became very good friends of us, and she had lost her husband and her son in the concentration camp. And he had lost his only daughter and his wife in the concentration camp. And I could understand. And lately, lately with all those anti-Semitism coming up, I often think about what she said to me. Because how could you bring,

actually people, eh children in this world. I think if I had known everything what I know now, I think, and I love my children dearly, I wouldn't have brought children in this world. I think, I don't know, but I think so.

P: You feel that the new, eh Nazism and the new anti-Semitism that is prevalent today, like in the 90's...

VH: I'm so afraid that my children have to go through what we had to go through. I'm so afraid of that. And more and more, I am afraid.

P: Do you ever talk to them about it?

VH: No. I haven't.

P: Do you ever, ah, discuss with them the issues that come up about the, the new Nazi movement and your...

VH: Oh they, they...

P: Are they aware?

VH: Oh yes, yes, they're very involved in everything. They're very involved in everything.

P: So they too are aware?

VH: Oh absolutely, absolutely.

P: Do you think it's really possible that such a horrible, ah, tragedy would repeat itself again?

VH: I think it will. Don't you think so? You are from Europe too. Don't you see the same things happen what happened in 1933?

P: Well, I hope not.

VH: Of course, you hope not, of course you hope not.

P: I like to be, eh, more optimistic, and that, that is why I have made a commitment on my part, as a survivor of the Holocaust, and, eh, to contribute, eh, by leaving a legacy and

by recording the stories and making, ah, the world around us, the community, not just Jewish, and Jewish in particular. To make every one aware that a tragedy such as this should never happen.

VH: Of course it shouldn't.

P: And that this is really a degradation of the human spirit.

VH: Um hum.

P: The people who did the killing could not have felt, couldn't feel good about themselves, inasmuch as they destroyed all these lives. So, that is my contribution, and, and...

VH: I think it's a wonderful contribution.

P: And, but I, I don't, eh, feel as defeatist about it. I don't see it really happening. There may be attempts, if we let it. If we, I mean, all of the people in Europe must become aware too. They must be educated.

VH: I think that the people in Europe are much, much more aware of it as the people in Canada and America. I think the people in Canada and America are not aware of it. I'm afraid. So.

P: So how would you like your story to, eh, to make a contribution or what is the purpose of your telling this story?

VH: Eh, the same purpose what you have. Only hope that it will help. Hope that next generations will have a, um knowledge of all those things. The same purpose what you have about it.

P: Well, thank you very much for contributing and maybe together we can make a difference.

VH: But I am not optimistic. No, I'm very pessimistic. (A big sigh.) I wish I could say something else.

P: Do you feel optimistic Reva?

H: I do, but I haven't lived through what you've lived through.
So I have a different perspective.

VH: And I haven't lived through what the people have lived through
in the concentration camp. I feel myself very lucky what I
went through, was really...

[END OF INTERVIEW]