

THEA M. LEAVITT

Holocaust Oral History Project

August 7, 1990

San Francisco, California

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1 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, AUGUST 7, 1990

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4 THEA M. LEAVITT,

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6
7 Q INTERVIEWING THEA LEAVITT. WE ARE THE
8 HOLOCAUST LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTER, 639 14TH AVENUE IN
9 SAN FRANCISCO.

10 MRS. LEAVITT, LET'S JUST START BY HAVING YOU
11 GIVE YOUR FULL NAME AND YOUR MAIDEN NAME, YOUR DATE OF BIRTH
12 AND WHERE YOU WERE BORN.

13 A I'm Thea Mendels-Leavitt, and I was born in the
14 Hague on February 2nd -- February 7th, 1931.

15 Q NOW LET'S BEGIN BY HAVING YOU TELL US ABOUT
16 YOUR FAMILY AND HOME; HOW IT WAS WHEN YOU WERE BORN IN THE
17 HAGUE, AND AS EARLY AS YOU CAN REMEMBER, VERY BRIEFLY, AND
18 DETAILS OF YOUR EARLY LIFE THERE AND YOUR FAMILY SITUATION.

19 A Well, I was the first child born to Arnie and
20 Bernhardt Mendels.

21 We lived, I suppose you would call, a middle
22 class family neighborhood. I had a grandmother living
23 around the corner and I had a sister that was -- entered
24 into the family three and a half years later.

25 I don't remember my childhood -- early

1 childhood -- in any way remarkable. It was very pleasant,
2 as far as I remember, and it was in -- since it is in a
3 Jewish setting that you are interested in, we celebrated
4 Friday night.

5 Every Friday night we got together with family
6 and said the broukas and sang and so on. We had a kosher
7 home. I went to Temple mostly with my grandmother. My
8 parents didn't really participate very much, although the
9 home was kosher. I went to Temple with my grandmother.

10 As I started school I went to a local school,
11 of which I think, in retrospect, not a lot of kids were
12 Jewish, but that really wasn't terribly important. I didn't
13 look back on that, whether somebody was Jewish or not
14 Jewish. We didn't really think about that.

15 I don't know what else I could say about the
16 early childhood.

17 Q LET ME ASK YOU, THEN.

18 A Yeah.

19 Q YOUR FATHER'S OCCUPATION, WHAT DID HE DO?

20 A Well, he worked in Rotterdam, so he took the
21 train every morning.

22 Q YOU LIVED IN THE HAGUE?

23 A In The Hague, yeah. That's not very far.

24 Q NOT VERY FAR.

25 A No. And he worked for a company that made

1 what -- what you call it? Barrels and boxes. He was a, I
2 think you might say one of the vice-presidents. That's what
3 people have told me, anyway, the title would be comparable
4 to.

5 And my mother had studied history. Well, she
6 was a housewife at home with us.

7 Q AND YOU HAD A RELIGIOUS HOME, BUT YOU SAY YOUR
8 PARENTS DIDN'T TAKE PART TOO MUCH. YOUR GRANDMOTHER --

9 A Not too much, yeah. I think they went to
10 Temple on the major holidays, but not ordinarily.

11 Q UH-HUH. AND BEING JEWISH WAS NOT PARTICULARLY
12 OUT OF THE ORDINARY OR PARTICULARLY NOTED IN ANY WAY?

13 A No.

14 Q EITHER IN THE SCHOOL OR NEIGHBORHOOD?

15 A No, no.

16 Q WAS IT A JEWISH NEIGHBORHOOD OF A SORT?

17 A No, it wasn't. No, it wasn't, and if I try to
18 think were there other Jewish children on the street, I
19 don't know whether it would have been noticeable
20 particularly, but I wasn't aware of it.

21 And also in school, one thing, that I had some
22 Jewish lessons. I started learning Hebrew and so on, I
23 think when I was six, probably, and I got together with two
24 other children, neither of them which lived close to me, so
25 that makes me think maybe -- well, definitely it wasn't a

1 Jewish neighborhood, per se.

2 Q IT WAS SOME -- SOME DISTANCE?

3 A Yeah.

4 Q WHAT SORT OF SCHOOL WERE YOU TAKING HEBREW
5 LESSONS IN?

6 A I guess -- I guess private. It was done at one
7 of our homes, I think.

8 Q YOU WERE NOT IN A JEWISH SCHOOL, PER SE?

9 A No.

10 Q IT WAS A --

11 A No.

12 Q -- PUBLIC SCHOOL?

13 A Well, yeah. I think so.

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A I think so.

16 Q UH-HUH. AND THAT WAS WHEN? THOSE ARE VERY
17 EARLY MEMORIES, THEN. WAS IT MORE OR LESS AN ORTHODOX HOME
18 OR A MORE LIBERAL HOME, OR HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE IT?

19 A Well, it was --

20 Q CONSERVATIVE JEWISH HOME?

21 A Yeah. I suppose conservative. A carry over of
22 my grandmother and uncles, yeah.

23 Q YOUR FAMILY HAD BEEN IN HOLLAND FOR SOME TIME,
24 I GATHER?

25 A Yes. My grandparents -- no. Actually, only

1 one of my grandparents, my father's father was born in
2 Holland. Both my parents were born in Holland and the other
3 grandparents were born in Germany.

4 Q THEY WERE IN BUSINESS OR SIMILAR OCCUPATIONS?

5 A Yeah; business.

6 Q AND THEN YOUR FATHER WAS AN OFFICER -- OFFICIAL
7 VICE-PRESIDENT, YOU'VE BEEN TOLD.

8 A Yeah.

9 Q IT WAS A BUSINESS COMPANY, WHICH IS A
10 COMFORTABLE POSITION, I WOULD IMAGINE.

11 A Yeah.

12 Q SOUNDS LIKE A COMFORTABLE --

13 A Uh-huh.

14 Q YOU DESCRIBED IT AS MAYBE A MIDDLE CLASS --

15 A Yeah, I would think so.

16 Q UH-HUH. AND WELL-ASSIMILATED INTO THE
17 COMMUNITY --

18 A Right; right.

19 Q -- AS I WOULD UNDERSTAND. AND ANTI-SEMITISM OR
20 ANTI-JEWISH FEELING WAS SOMETHING THAT YOU DIDN'T ENCOUNTER?

21 A No. Right.

22 Q YOU WERE A LITTLE GIRL, OF COURSE, IN 1940.

23 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

24 Q NINE YEARS OLD.

25 A Yeah.

1 Q YEAH? AND YOUR HOME WAS IN THE HAGUE AT THAT
2 TIME?

3 A Right.

4 Q AND YOUR FAMILY WAS JUST AS YOU DESCRIBED IT.
5 EVERYTHING WAS GOING WELL.

6 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

7 Q AND DO YOU RECALL AT ALL EVER HEARING YOUR
8 PARENTS TALK ABOUT OR OTHER PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT THE
9 POSSIBILITIES OF SOME -- ANY SORT OF DANGER COMING FROM
10 GERMANY AT ALL?

11 A No, I don't really remember that. I had family
12 who left because of the danger that they realized.

13 Q LEFT --

14 A Left Holland.

15 Q -- HOLLAND.

16 A And came to America, yeah.

17 Q UH-HUH.

18 A But I don't know if that was really transmitted
19 to me.

20 Q WHAT FAMILY WAS THAT?

21 A The family that I lived with once when I came
22 to the United States, after the one --

23 Q I SEE. NO FAMILY OF YOURS --

24 A -- who was my mother's sister.

25 Q -- LEFT BEFORE THE WAR; BEFORE THE GERMANS

1 CAME?

2 A Yeah. My aunt and uncle did.

3 Q THEY DID?

4 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

5 Q AND CAME TO THE UNITED STATES?

6 A And came to the United States.

7 Q DO YOU RECALL WHAT THEIR EXPLANATION WAS WHY
8 THEY WERE PICKING UP TO GO?

9 A Well, they realized what was in store or they
10 anticipated.

11 Q UH-HUH.

12 A Yeah.

13 Q DO YOU IMAGINE OR HAVE THE BELIEF THAT THEY
14 KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN GERMANY?

15 A Uh-huh. Right, yes. And apparently they tried
16 to get our family to also leave, and I guess my parents felt
17 that -- you know, they didn't think it would be as bad as it
18 was.

19 Q UH-HUH.

20 A And also didn't know what they would -- you
21 know, how they would start life here. What they would do.
22 Those things.

23 Q YOU WERE NINE YEARS OLD. WERE YOUR PARENTS --
24 DO YOU KNOW, ROUGHLY, WHAT THEIR AGES MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

25 A Yeah. My father celebrated his 40th birthday

1 soon around that time, I think.

2 Q UH-HUH. ABOUT THE TIME OF --

3 A The time --

4 Q -- THE WAR, ABOUT?

5 A Yeah.

6 Q SO THEY WERE RELATIVELY YOUNG, TOO. WHAT -- WE
7 WOULD CONSIDER THEM YOUNG, MARRIED PEOPLE TODAY?

8 A Yeah.

9 Q OKAY. AND YOUR SISTER -- AT THAT TIME YOU WERE
10 THE ONLY CHILD THEN?

11 A In 1940, no.

12 Q NO? SHE HAD BEEN BORN?

13 A Oh, yeah. She was born in '34.

14 Q OH, I'M SORRY.

15 A Yeah.

16 Q SO YOUR FAMILY, THEN, HAD TWO CHILDREN?

17 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

18 Q YOU HAD NO OTHER BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

19 A No.

20 Q AND YOUR PARENTS, I GATHER, WERE NOT OVERLY
21 ACTIVE IN THE CHURCH; NOT TERRIBLY ACTIVE. YOUR
22 GRANDMOTHER, OF COURSE, HOWEVER --

23 A Yeah.

24 Q SO I SAID "CHURCH." I'M SORRY.

25 A That's alright.

1 Q I MEANT SYNAGOGUE. SO THEN WHAT IS THE FIRST
2 RECOLLECTION THAT YOU HAD OF THAT THERE WAS SOME DANGER
3 COMING? WAS IT THE FACT THAT YOUR UNCLE LEFT?

4 A Yeah. See, I don't know if they told us why
5 they left. To tell you the truth, I can't -- really not
6 remember that, but I guess really started on May 10th when
7 the invasion took place.

8 Q WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST RECOLLECTIONS OF THAT?

9 A I remember the planes. The sound of the
10 planes.

11 Q WHERE WERE YOU?

12 A At home and --

13 Q AND --

14 A I think it was early morning that it happened,
15 so --

16 Q CAN YOU DESCRIBE --

17 A I must have woken up to the sound of the planes
18 going over and looking out and seeing sort of the sky, as if
19 it was covered with planes.

20 And later on we started -- what do you call it
21 when people -- the people -- the people who jump? The
22 parachutes? Parachutists, actually. You could see them
23 coming down.

24 Q THIS WAS AT THE HAGUE?

25 A Yeah.

1 Q THEY DID BOMB ROTTERDAM?

2 A Yeah.

3 Q BUT --

4 A No. Wait a minute. Did the Germans bomb
5 Rotterdam?

6 Q THEY DID. THEY DID.

7 A Oh.

8 Q A LITTLE LATER.

9 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

10 Q BUT YOU COULD SEE THE PARACHUTISTS COMING?

11 A Yeah.

12 Q COULD YOU HEAR BOMBS GOING OFF OR ANYTHING?
13 EXPLOSIONS?

14 A Well, yeah. I heard noises. Of what of -- I
15 don't know what they were.

16 Q WHAT WAS -- WHAT DID YOU AND YOUR FAMILY DO AT
17 THAT TIME? WERE THE PLANES OVERHEAD?

18 A I don't -- not any sort of emergency cover or
19 anything like that, no. I remember Dutch soldiers in the
20 street with guns.

21 Q UH-HUH. (Yes)

22 A They, you know --

23 Q WHAT WAS THE SITUATION? WERE THEY --

24 A They were --

25 Q DID YOU KNOW IT WAS A WAR?

1 A Yeah. That was announced over the radio,
2 uh-huh.

3 Q UH-HUH. (Yes)

4 A Yeah.

5 Q AND DO YOU RECALL WHAT YOUR PARENTS MIGHT HAVE
6 SAID AT THAT TIME?

7 A No.

8 Q NO? IT WAS IN MAY?

9 A Yeah.

10 Q UH-HUH. AND THE WEATHER IN HOLLAND IN MAY, IS
11 IT NICE AND WARM, OR CAN IT BE A LITTLE COOL OR --

12 A Yeah. It's usually a little cool in Holland.

13 Q A LITTLE COOL STILL IN MAY?

14 A Yeah.

15 Q THIS WAS A SCHOOL? SCHOOL WAS IN SESSION IN
16 MAY?

17 A Yeah.

18 Q WERE YOU TO HAVE GONE TO SCHOOL ON THAT DAY?

19 A Oh, I don't know what it was on that day.

20 Q THE 10TH.

21 A Yeah. I don't mean -- I don't know if it was a
22 Sunday or a Monday or what. Actually, I don't know.

23 Those seem to be the only things that I
24 remember is the sounds and seeing them come down and the
25 soldier in the street with the gun looking -- I suppose

1 looking to see if any of these parachutists had materialized
2 so that they could --

3 Q TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, DID ANY OF THEM FALL TO THE
4 GROUND NEAR YOUR HOME?

5 A No; no.

6 Q NO EXPLOSIVES NEAR YOUR HOME?

7 A Huh-huh. (No)

8 Q THEN WHAT WAS THE FIRST MOMENT THAT IT ACTUALLY
9 CAME HOME TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY, IF YOU RECALL, THAT,
10 INDEED, THERE HAD BEEN AN INVASION AND THAT BASICALLY THE
11 GERMANS HAD OVERWHELMED?

12 A Oh, that was five days later, I think, that we
13 capitulated, and so that's --

14 Q IN THE MEANWHILE, DO YOU RECALL WHAT YOU AND
15 YOUR FAMILY DID?

16 A No. I think we stayed home.

17 Q YOUR FATHER CONTINUED TO GO TO WORK?

18 A I doubt -- oh, I can't say.

19 Q YOU DON'T REMEMBER THAT?

20 A No.

21 Q UH-HUH. AND YOU AND YOUR SISTER PROBABLY
22 STAYED HOME DURING THAT TIME?

23 A Yeah. I would think so.

24 Q DID YOU LISTEN TO THE RADIO A LOT?

25 A Yeah, but I was so young, I think I really

1 didn't realize what it meant.

2 Q UH-HUH. YOU DON'T RECALL ANY OF THE THINGS
3 THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD ON THE RADIO?

4 A (The witness shook her head in the negative).

5 Q DID THE QUEEN MAKE --

6 A Yes. Now that you mention it, she did, and she
7 escaped to England, yes, and there was a broadcast from
8 England, yeah.

9 Q SHE HAD BROADCAST TO --

10 A Yeah.

11 Q YOU DON'T RECALL ANYTHING SHE MIGHT HAVE SAID?

12 A No.

13 Q DURING THAT PERIOD OF TIME DO YOU RECALL
14 ANYTHING YOUR PARENTS, FATHER, MOTHER, ANYBODY ELSE MIGHT
15 HAVE SAID TO YOU TO MAKE YOU THINK IF THE GERMANS WIN THIS
16 IT WILL BE BAD FOR JEWS? ANY SORT OF --

17 A No.

18 Q -- APPREHENSION ABOUT BEING JEWISH?

19 A No. Huh-huh.

20 Q NO? NOBODY SAID --

21 A No. They may have, but I don't remember.

22 Q I SEE.

23 A Yeah.

24 Q WE'RE JUST TRYING TO FIND OUT --

25 A Yeah.

1 Q -- WHAT YOU REMEMBER. YOU WERE YOUNG.

2 A Yeah.

3 Q SO AT THAT TIME, AS BEST YOUR MEMORY CAN SERVE
4 YOU AS A LITTLE GIRL, YOU DON'T RECALL ANYTHING THAT MADE
5 YOU AWARE THAT THIS WOULD BE A VERY BAD THING -- A VERY BAD
6 SITUATION -- FOR JEWS UNDER GERMAN RULE?

7 A Well, we had some relatives in Germany. I
8 don't know of what connections I made, really. I think I
9 had -- I did have some sort of a slight understanding,
10 probably, yeah. Maybe I did have some.

11 Q DID YOU HAVE A LOT OF RELATIVES IN GERMANY?

12 A No. A few who had been in Germany and had left
13 Germany and were in Holland now, actually.

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A Yeah.

16 Q AND THERE WERE A LOT OF REFUGEES FROM GERMANY
17 IN HOLLAND AT THE TIME?

18 A Yeah.

19 Q PERHAPS SOME OF THOSE WERE YOUR RELATIVES?

20 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

21 Q DO YOU KNOW WHERE THEY CAME FROM IN GERMANY?

22 A No. I can't really tell you.

23 Q UH-HUH.

24 A I remember a few cities come to mind, but I'm
25 not sure that's correct or who would be coming from where.

1 Q I SEE. OKAY. OKAY. THEN WHAT'S THE FIRST
2 RECOLLECTION YOU HAVE OF THE GERMANS ACTUALLY BEING THERE
3 AND BEING IN CHARGE OF THINGS IN GERMANY -- IN THE
4 NETHERLANDS?

5 A Well, all the restrictions that began.

6 Q DO YOU RECALL THE FIRST -- WHEN YOU STARTED
7 SEEING GERMANS -- SOLDIERS ON THE STREET?

8 A No.

9 Q BUT THE RESTRICTIONS BEGAN RIGHT AWAY, OF
10 COURSE.

11 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

12 Q UH-HUH. DO YOU RECALL HOW --

13 A What kind of things?

14 Q WHAT SORT OF THINGS.

15 A Well, I did put a few notes down to remember
16 that.

17 Well, curfew was one thing which, of course,
18 wouldn't have been terribly important for a little girl, but
19 they were certain hours that you had to be in with -- or in
20 by.

21 Q YOUR FAMILY WAS AFFECTED BY THAT?

22 A Yeah. Or at least I heard about it.

23 Q WHAT SORT OF THINGS DID YOU HEAR ABOUT?

24 A That you couldn't be out after a certain time.

25 Q UH-HUH. YOUR FATHER JUST HAD TO BE HOME EARLY?

1 A Well, I think it had more to do with evening
2 activities.

3 Q EARLY IN THE EVENING?

4 A Yeah, uh-huh.

5 Q UH-HUH.

6 A And we had to turn in valuables, like our
7 jewelry, I guess, and silver. Also bicycles, which affected
8 us more directly.

9 Q SURE. DO YOU RECALL IF YOUR FAMILY HAD
10 VALUABLES THAT THEY DID TURN IN?

11 A Yeah.

12 Q THEY ASKED FOR YOUR JEWELRY?

13 A Yes.

14 Q FURS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

15 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

16 Q AND YOUR FAMILY HAD TO TURN --

17 A Well, we turned in some things, I guess, and
18 bicycles and so on.

19 Q UH-HUH.

20 A Also Jews weren't allowed to use public
21 transportation any more. That's the sort of thing that, you
22 know, that would have affected me, I remember.

23 Not street cars and trains and trolleys and
24 so --

25 Q DID YOUR FAMILY HAVE AN AUTOMOBILE?

1 A No.

2 Q UH-HUH. DO YOU RECALL IF YOU HAD BICYCLES?

3 A We did have bicycles and we turned in some of
4 them.

5 Q YOUR WHOLE FAMILY MAY HAVE HAD BICYCLES.

6 A Yeah.

7 Q THERE WERE SO MANY BICYCLES.

8 A Right. That was the usual mode of
9 transportation. If you didn't walk, then you bicycled.

10 Q UH-HUH. YOU HAD TO TURN THOSE IN?

11 A Yeah. And we couldn't go to non-Jewish homes
12 any more, which in our case made a lot of difference
13 because --

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A -- we were surrounded by non-Jewish friends.

16 Q UH-HUH.

17 A And we couldn't visit them any more and I
18 couldn't go --

19 Q EVEN CHILDREN?

20 A Even children, yeah. And couldn't go to the
21 normal school; the public school. Had to go to the Jewish
22 school.

23 Q WAS THERE ONE?

24 A They made one.

25 Q MADE ONE?

1 A They created one, yeah.

2 Q UH-HUH. GO AHEAD. YOU HAVE SOME MORE?

3 A Yeah. Also Jews were only allowed to shop late
4 in the day when the things -- the things -- the commodities
5 were already mostly bought out or when there was not an
6 awful lot left to shop with or for.

7 Q UH-HUH.

8 A Of course we had to wear the stars that --

9 Q THAT WAS --

10 A We saw that everywhere.

11 Q IT WAS AN ORDER THAT EVERYONE -- EVERYONE
12 JEWISH WORE A STAR. PERHAPS, DID THE HALF-JEWISH PEOPLE
13 WEAR STARS? DO YOU RECALL HOW THAT WORKED? YOU WERE A
14 LITTLE YOUNG TO REMEMBER THAT SORT OF THING.

15 A Yeah. No, I guess I don't know. They probably
16 had -- I know there was some way that you had to be -- that
17 it made a lot of difference whether your mother was Jewish
18 or your father was Jewish or how much. They talked about
19 half-Jewish and a quarter Jewish and all that, which I, you
20 know, I never heard about before.

21 Q THE PERSONS DID IDENTIFY THAT CERTAIN --

22 A Yeah. Yes.

23 Q -- HAD TO WEAR A GOLD STAR?

24 A Right. Yeah.

25 Q UH-HUH. AND YOU, AS CHILDREN, DID THAT, ALSO?

1 A Yes.

2 Q UH-HUH.

3 A Yes. My mother had made -- had put it on a
4 little bolero or vest so that we could just put that on top
5 of whatever we wore.

6 Q YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE A DIFFERENT STAR FOR
7 EVERY GARMENT?

8 A No.

9 Q OKAY. ANYTHING FURTHER THAT YOU HAVE ON YOUR
10 POSTCARD?

11 A And, of course, the raids on Jewish men. I
12 remember that. That the doorbell rang.

13 Q THIS WOULD BE -- DO YOU RECALL ANY THINGS LIKE
14 WHAT YEAR IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN? HOW OLD YOU WERE?

15 A Oh, it probably was '42 because the -- soon
16 after that --

17 Q UH-HUH.

18 A -- that we left to go underground.

19 Q GO AHEAD AND DESCRIBE THE RAIDS. THE DOORBELL
20 RANG.

21 A Yeah. All I remember, that the doorbell would
22 ring and there would be sort of a scary feeling and that my
23 father would go to the neighbor, going up the balcony, cross
24 over from our balcony to the neighbor's balcony.

25 Q TO --

1 A To not be home.

2 Q I SEE.

3 A Yeah.

4 Q YOU WERE IN THE APARTMENT OR AN ADJOINING
5 RESIDENCE?

6 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

7 Q A RESIDENCE?

8 A A residence.

9 Q AND YOU COULD STEP FROM YOUR BALCONY INTO THE
10 NEIGHBOR'S?

11 A Right. Uh-huh.

12 Q AND THEY DID COME AND ASK FOR YOUR FATHER? DO
13 YOU RECALL?

14 A No. I don't recall if that --

15 Q YOU DON'T RECALL?

16 A I don't remember what happened. I just
17 remember the reactions to a doorbell, an unexpected doorbell
18 ringing, that he disappeared.

19 Q THE NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR WAS A GENTILE FAMILY --

20 A Yeah.

21 Q -- I GATHER.

22 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

23 Q AND WERE THEY FRIENDLY ENOUGH WITH YOU THAT
24 THEY WOULD HAVE -- THEY OBVIOUSLY PERMITTED YOUR FATHER TO
25 DO THIS?

1 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

2 Q DO YOU RECALL WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED, OR DO
3 YOU HAVE ANY WAY OF KNOWING WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF THEY
4 HAD BEEN DISCOVERED SHELTERING YOUR FATHER OR SHELTERING ANY
5 OTHER JEW?

6 A No. At that time, I don't know. It was later
7 on, of course, I did hear.

8 Q YOU HAD A CERTAIN SENSE OF DANGER?

9 A Yeah, we had.

10 Q YOU WERE ONLY NINE OR MAYBE TEN AT THIS POINT?

11 A Or eleven.

12 Q AND YOUR FATHER FELT IT WAS CERTAINLY SAFER FOR
13 HIM TO NOT BE HOME --

14 A Right.

15 Q -- WHEN THEY CAME.

16 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

17 Q WHO, PRECISELY, CAME? WAS IT GERMANS OR WAS IT
18 DUTCH POLICE? DO YOU KNOW?

19 A Oh, I think it was -- well, the NSB or National
20 Socialist -- I don't know what the "B" stands for.

21 Q WERE THEY DUTCH NAZIS?

22 A Yeah. Or Germans together. I mean I --

23 Q UH-HUH. (YES)

24 A -- you know, I'm afraid, you know --

25 Q THAT'S ALRIGHT.

1 A -- I don't know.

2 Q YOU WERE A LITTLE GIRL.

3 A I'm talking about general --

4 Q WE'RE JUST DISCUSSING AND PERHAPS --

5 A -- impressions.

6 Q -- PERHAPS YOUR MEMORIES WILL COME OUT. DO YOU
7 RECALL IF THEY WERE UNIFORMED PEOPLE?

8 A No. I don't remember seeing anybody at the
9 door. We -- you know, we couldn't go to the door. I
10 imagine it would have been my mother who would open the
11 door.

12 Q BUT THEY WANTED MEN?

13 A That was the knowledge that my parents had.

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A And somehow that trickled down to me, too. I
16 don't think they -- well, maybe they did talk about it
17 straight out, but that was the fear; that they would be
18 looking for men.

19 Q YOUR MOTHER WAS NOT, AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME --
20 WAS NOT AFRAID OF BEING TAKEN AWAY?

21 A No. I don't think so.

22 Q IT WAS MEN WHO YOU FELT THEY WERE AFTER.

23 A Yeah.

24 Q WHAT -- THESE REGULATIONS AND RULES AS THEY
25 CAME, THEY DIDN'T ALL COME AT ONCE?

1 A No; right. A little at a time.

2 Q A LITTLE AT A TIME. THEY STARTED, THOUGH,
3 PRETTY QUICKLY AFTER THE GERMANS CAME? A FEW MONTHS? DO
4 YOU RECALL?

5 A Well, no, I don't recall it, but I think that's
6 correct.

7 Q UH-HUH. HOW DID THIS AFFECT THE RELATIONSHIP
8 OF -- WITH YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS; YOUR NOT JEWISH
9 NEIGHBORS?

10 A Yeah. Well, that's what we had, and the fact
11 that we couldn't, you know, go to their homes. We still
12 could play together on the street, and we didn't go into --

13 Q DID THEY -- WOULD THEY STILL CONTINUE TO PLAY
14 WITH YOU?

15 A Yeah.

16 Q YOU WERE WEARING YOUR LITTLE STARS.

17 A Uh-huh. I think so, yeah.

18 Q WERE THERE OTHER CHILDREN IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
19 THAT YOU RECALL WEARING STARS, ALSO?

20 A No.

21 Q SO CONCEIVABLY YOU WERE --

22 A Yeah. I think we were in a rather mixed
23 neighborhood. I mean not many Jews who mixed in within
24 that -- in our street, anyway. In the area where I would
25 play.

1 Q WHEN THEY SET UP YOUR SCHOOL, DID THEY -- DID
2 THEY HAVE TROUBLE OR DID THE CHILDREN COME FROM AFAR TO THE
3 JEWISH SCHOOL THAT YOU SET UP?

4 A I think so.

5 Q UH-HUH. WHERE WAS IT? IN A -- YOU DON'T
6 RECALL THAT?

7 A No. I have no -- I don't remember what it was
8 like. I just --

9 Q YOUR SISTER --

10 A She went, also.

11 Q UH-HUH. YOU WERE ABLE TO STUDY IN YOUR OWN
12 SCHOOL, I GUESS. YOU WERE ABLE TO STUDY JEWISH THINGS.
13 HEBREW? JEWISH CULTURE?

14 A In the Jewish school?

15 Q YES. IN THE JEWISH SCHOOL.

16 A I imagine so, yeah. I don't remember the
17 studies there or the classes or anything.

18 Q AND YOU SPOKE DUTCH THERE?

19 A Yeah.

20 Q OF COURSE YOU DON'T HAVE TOO MUCH HEBREW.

21 A Well, no, not in a fluent way of speaking it.
22 I mean reading it, of course, yeah, and so on.

23 Q OKAY. OKAY.

24 A But --

25 Q THEN WE'RE NOW INTO THE WAR AND PERHAPS A YEAR

1 INTO IT AND PERHAPS 19 --

2 A Uh-huh. '41.

3 Q -- 41 OR EARLY '42.

4 A Uh-huh.

5 Q WHAT HAPPENED? WAS YOUR FAMILY BROKEN UP?

6 YOUR PARENTS? WERE YOU SEPARATED FROM YOUR PARENTS OR --

7 A Well, we separated ourselves. It wasn't done
8 by them. It was done by my parents, with help of the
9 Dutch --

10 Q EXPLAIN THAT. HOW ABOUT WHEN --

11 A I believe it was July 1942, that with the help
12 of the Underground, my parents or the Underground found
13 places for us in the country.

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A Where people were willing to take us in.

16 Q UH-HUH. AS A WHOLE FAMILY?

17 A No, no. We separated. My sister and I were in
18 one family and they were in another, but we were in the same
19 village.

20 Q IS THAT RIGHT?

21 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

22 Q THAT VILLAGE WAS WHAT?

23 A Oldebroek in Gelderland.

24 Q AND HOW BIG A VILLAGE WAS THAT?

25 A It was rather small. It had one main street

1 and one side street. As far as numbers of people living
2 there, I don't know.

3 Q DO YOU RECALL WHY -- WHAT EXPLANATION WAS GIVEN
4 TO YOU ABOUT WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO DO THIS? LEAVE YOUR
5 HOME IN THE HAGUE?

6 A Yeah. By then we realized that the Germans
7 were after the Jews.

8 Q UH-HUH.

9 A And how much and degrees and all that, I don't
10 remember, but I knew definitely that we had to avoid being
11 discovered by Germans.

12 Q UH-HUH.

13 A And our trip away from home was around a scary
14 times when we had to take our stars off to get on the street
15 car, and I remember worrying, walking to the street car,
16 that somebody who would know me would realize that I wasn't
17 wearing my star that day or at that particular time.

18 Q UH-HUH.

19 A And getting on the train, the street car --
20 later on the train -- and the man from the Underground met
21 us.

22 He was already on the street car and he sort of
23 signaled to us to move to a certain area. And then we
24 travelled, my sister and I, and he -- but I also don't think
25 that we really were with him. We were together but on the

1 same train, but not as a small group.

2 Q BUT YOU WERE IN CONTACT WITH HIM?

3 A We could see him, yeah.

4 Q AND SOMEBODY FROM THE UNDERGROUND ESCORTED YOU.
5 AND WAS YOUR FAMILY STILL TOGETHER AS A UNIT?

6 A No, no, no, no. Just my sister and I went
7 together.

8 Q UH-HUH. AND YOUR PARENTS WERE IN ANOTHER CAR
9 OR THEY DIDN'T --

10 A I don't know if they came on the same -- they
11 may have come on a different train.

12 Q UH-HUH.

13 A So --

14 Q SO YOU STARTED ON YOUR JOURNEY ON THE STREET
15 CAR.

16 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

17 Q AND THEN HOW TO YOU DID YOU COMPLETE THE
18 JOURNEY TO ALDERBROOK?

19 A Then we moved to a train.

20 Q A TRAIN?

21 A Yeah.

22 Q WHICH WENT DIRECTLY --

23 A I think so, yeah.

24 Q UH-HUH. WAS THIS UNDERGROUND PERSON ON THE
25 SAME --

1 A Uh-huh, yeah. And Germans were also on the
2 train.

3 Q GERMANS IN UNIFORM?

4 A Yeah.

5 Q THIS PERSON WAS SITTING AWAY FROM YOU BUT YOU
6 COULD SEE EACH OTHER?

7 A Yeah. I think so, yeah.

8 Q UH-HUH. AND YOU DIDN'T HAVE YOUR STAR ON?

9 A Huh-huh. (No)

10 Q SO WHAT WERE YOUR FEARS ABOUT THAT?

11 A Yeah. Well, I was afraid that they would ask
12 us to see papers or something.

13 Q YES. DID YOU HAVE SOME PAPERS?

14 A I suppose everybody had papers --

15 Q UH-HUH.

16 A -- they had to carry, so, again, I don't know,
17 though.

18 Q THE FEAR WAS BECAUSE YOU HAD BEEN TOLD THAT YOU
19 HAD TO WEAR THE STAR?

20 A Yeah. And also about the Germans discovering
21 us, and I also remembered that I realized that when I left
22 our home that we might never return there or -- yeah. Might
23 never return there because we might be discovered to be
24 Jewish somewhere.

25 Q HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THAT? DO YOU RECALL

1 YOUR PARENTS TELLING YOU; HOW THEY BROUGHT THIS UP?

2 A Well, yeah. They must have told us what was
3 going on and why we were leaving home and why we had to go
4 with a family we didn't know and why all these things were
5 happening.

6 Q UH-HUH. AND THIS FAMILY WAS DISCOVERED FOR YOU
7 AND YOU WERE MORE OR LESS ASSIGNED TO THEM BY THE
8 UNDERGROUND, I GATHER?

9 A Yeah. Yeah.

10 Q WAS THIS BEING DONE TO MANY JEWISH FAMILIES, AS
11 FAR AS YOU KNOW?

12 A Yes. I would think so.

13 Q UH-HUH.

14 A I mean I don't know how families found each
15 other, but there was an awful lot of this going on.

16 Q YOU DON'T KNOW HOW?

17 A Whether the Underground did this, in many
18 cases, or whether in some cases people had their own
19 connections. I think they may have known somebody in the
20 middle of the country in a small place.

21 Q UH-HUH.

22 A And, you know, contacted them directly
23 themselves.

24 Q IN YOUR CASE YOU DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOUR FATHER
25 OR MOTHER --

1 A No. In our case they were complete strangers.

2 Q I SEE.

3 A It was done through the Underground; I know
4 that.

5 Q DO YOU KNOW WHETHER YOUR FATHER WAS THE ONE OR
6 YOUR MOTHER WAS THE ONE THAT CONTACTED THE UNDERGROUND AND
7 ASKED FOR THIS SERVICE?

8 A I think my father may actually have been
9 involved in some sort of Underground thing, which actually
10 that only occurred to me yesterday as I was thinking about
11 it.

12 Because it was some sort of a group where --
13 what I knew about it was that there was sort of an athletic
14 organization, and only yesterday it occurred to me maybe
15 that was the reason. You know, that was the cover.

16 Q UH-HUH. AND -- BUT YOU APPARENTLY REMEMBER --
17 NOT PRECISELY -- HOW THE CONNECTION WAS MADE WITH THE
18 UNDERGROUND AND WHETHER THE underground CONTACTED YOUR
19 FAMILY OR YOUR FAMILY CONTACTED THEM AND ASKED FOR THIS SORT
20 OF --

21 A No. I think it must have been my family.

22 Q UH-HUH.

23 A I don't remember the Underground would go
24 out --

25 Q HAD THE CONFISCATIONS -- DO YOU RECALL WHETHER

1 YOUR -- WAS IT A RESIDENCE, AND DID YOU OWN YOUR HOME? YOUR
2 PARENTS OWN THEIR HOME?

3 A I've no idea.

4 Q YOU DON'T KNOW? YOU DON'T KNOW WHETHER THAT
5 PROPERTY WAS CONFISCATED BY THE GERMANS OR ANYTHING LIKE
6 THAT?

7 A No, no. Actually, I mean I know it was bombed
8 later on after we had gone, so --

9 Q WAS IT DESTROYED?

10 A Yeah, it was destroyed.

11 Q UH-HUH.

12 A We --

13 Q WERE YOU CONSCIOUS AS A CHILD OR YOUR PARENTS
14 CONSCIOUS THAT THERE WERE DUTCH NAZIS --

15 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

16 Q -- WHERE PEOPLE SYMPATHIZED --

17 A Yes; yes.

18 Q YOU WERE AWARE OF THAT?

19 A Yeah.

20 Q DID IT SEEM THERE WERE A LOT OF THEM, OR DO YOU
21 KNOW HOW THEY WERE CONSIDERED? LIKE CRANKS OR WERE THEY
22 CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE MAINSTREAM OF THINKING OR WHAT'S
23 YOUR RECOLLECTION?

24 A Not in the mainstream, no.

25 Q NO?

1 A No.

2 Q UH-HUH. DID YOU KNOW -- YOU AND YOUR PARENTS
3 KNOW -- ANY OF THOSE PEOPLE, PERSONALLY?

4 A No, I don't think so.

5 Q OR CLOSE TO THEM OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

6 A No. I don't think so.

7 Q SO YOU -- PERHAPS YOU WERE NOT FEARING THAT
8 THAT SORT OF PERSON WOULD BE TURNING YOU IN OR SOMETHING
9 LIKE THAT?

10 A No.

11 Q YOU FELT SECURE WITH YOUR PEERS?

12 A Yeah. Although you don't -- I suppose at the
13 same time I think I had this feeling that people -- that you
14 didn't know anybody's true feelings or what they -- they
15 represent one face and had another one for others. So
16 that -- that was the kind of feeling I think we had. We had
17 to be cautious in -- everywhere.

18 Q SO WHEN YOU AND YOUR FAMILY -- WHEN YOU LEFT
19 YOUR HOME, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN IN 19 --

20 A '42.

21 Q '42?

22 A The summer, yeah.

23 Q SUMMER OF '42?

24 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

25 Q THEN YOU WENT ON YOUR TRIP, AND WHAT HAPPENED

1 WHEN YOU GOT TO OLDEBROEK --

2 A We --

3 Q -- ON THE TRAIN AND HOW DID YOU KNOW TO GET
4 OFF?

5 A Well, the man of the Underground signaled us.
6 Directed us.

7 Q DO YOU REMEMBER THAT PART?

8 A No, no. But we got off and then we went on a
9 horse and carriage to the home.

10 Q HOW DID YOU KNOW THIS WAS YOUR HORSE AND
11 CARRIAGE?

12 A That man took charge.

13 Q YOU FOLLOWED HIM --

14 A Yeah. Right.

15 Q -- AT THAT POINT?

16 A This man, we had already met before. He was
17 not a stranger to us.

18 Q I SEE. UH-HUH. DO YOU KNOW WHO HE IS?

19 A Yeah. His name was Gerrard Boomer.

20 Q HE'S NOT JEWISH, OR --

21 A No, I don't think so.

22 Q UH-HUH. AND HE LIVED WHERE?

23 A I don't know.

24 Q IN --

25 A In the neighborhood somewhere or a little

1 further away.

2 Q UH-HUH. HE WAS A FAMILIAR FIGURE TO YOU?

3 A We've met him once or twice. He was one of the
4 people in the group of my father's and --

5 Q UH-HUH. AND SO YOU'RE IN OLDEBROEK AND YOU'RE
6 ON YOUR CARRIAGE AND HE'S ON THERE WITH YOU.

7 A Yeah.

8 Q WHAT DOES HE TELL YOU? DO YOU RECALL?

9 A No.

10 Q NO?

11 A No. But I remember arriving and hearing people
12 say, "oh, here they are." You know, little kids. The
13 family we went to had ten children of their own.

14 Q TEN CHILDREN?

15 A Ten children of their own.

16 Q YOU WERE ONE OF THEM?

17 A Right. Now, they weren't all at home any more
18 because, of course, there was quite a spread of ages, but I
19 remember the sound. Yeah. Oh, "here they are."

20 Q WAS THIS IN THE EVENING, AT NIGHT OR DAYTIME?

21 A I think it was late afternoon.

22 Q UH-HUH. AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

23 YOU'RE AMONGST STRANGERS NOW.

24 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

25 Q AND WHAT WERE YOU TOLD WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO

1 YOU BEFORE YOU ARRIVED THERE? THAT YOU WERE GOING TO HAVE
2 TO STAY THERE FOR A LONG TIME, OR WHAT WHAT WAS YOUR
3 IMPRESSION OF HOW IT WAS GOING TO BE?

4 A A length of time and all that, I don't suppose
5 was really -- we had to stay there till -- to insure our
6 safety, and the fact was also -- the separation was another
7 safety.

8 In case one of us got picked up or found by the
9 Germans, the others, not necessarily, would have to share
10 the same fate, and that's why we separated.

11 Q DO YOU RECALL WHAT YOUR IMPRESSION WAS OF WHAT
12 MIGHT HAPPEN TO YOU IF THE GERMANS FOUND YOU OR PICKED YOU
13 UP?

14 A Yeah. I think I did know about camps.

15 Q YOU THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE TAKEN TO A CAMP?

16 A Yeah. Yeah.

17 Q UH-HUH. IN HOLLAND OR SOMEWHERE ELSE? DO YOU
18 HAVE ANY IMPRESSION OF WHERE THAT MIGHT BE?

19 A I think I had the impression it was out of
20 Holland.

21 Q DID YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER JEWISH FAMILY OR
22 JEWISH PEOPLE --

23 A Yeah.

24 Q -- THAT HAD --

25 A Well, not that we knew what had happened to

1 them exactly, of course, but I do remember that there were
2 other people that had disappeared, let's say.

3 Q DISAPPEARED?

4 A Yeah. And the feeling, the sense was that they
5 were taken to a camp of some sort. There were different
6 kinds, like labor camps and camps for political prisoners
7 and --

8 Q UH-HUH.

9 A One thing I just recall was that when we had
10 decided -- when our family had decided to leave, that we
11 couldn't tell anybody that we were going; not even our
12 grandmother.

13 Q AND SHE LIVED NEARBY?

14 A Yeah. That was -- at this time, only my
15 father's mother was alive and --

16 Q UH-HUH.

17 A And I remember, you know, the feeling, the
18 worry, the compassion, that I think that even I felt as a
19 child that she would discover that we were gone and not
20 knowing.

21 But they felt that it was safer that she
22 wouldn't -- that she didn't know in case they would, you
23 know, miss us or go to her.

24 Q THE PERSONS THAT HAD BEEN PICKED UP -- AND YOUR
25 GRANDMOTHER WAS STILL THERE, OBVIOUSLY, AND YOUR FAMILY WAS

1 STILL THERE.

2 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

3 Q DO YOU RECALL IN ANY WAY ANYTHING THAT MIGHT
4 CHARACTERIZE THEM; I WONDER WHY THOSE PERSONS WERE PICKED
5 UP, IF YOU CAN HAVE ANY SENSE OF THAT AT ALL?

6 WERE THEY, PERHAPS, PERSONS WHO WERE VERY
7 VISIBLE IN THE COMMUNITY OR WERE THEY RABBIS OR LEADERS OF
8 ANY SORT, OR ANY IDEA OF WHY THOSE EARLY ONES WERE PICKED UP
9 EARLY?

10 A No. I think maybe some of the -- yeah. The
11 first people may have been sort of prominent in the Jewish
12 community or Jewish life.

13 Q UH-HUH.

14 A But at the same time I think it was -- you
15 probably had just a feeling that it was a random thing,
16 because if it had been so nicely delineated, then, you know,
17 we wouldn't have felt vulnerable.

18 Q YEAH.

19 A But everybody felt -- was vulnerable.

20 Q I SEE.

21 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

22 Q SO THE FEAR OF RANDOM --

23 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

24 Q -- SELECTION WAS --

25 A Yeah.

1 Q -- WAS PART OF IT.

2 A Yeah.

3 Q WERE YOU TOLD WHEN YOU STARTED ON YOUR JOURNEY
4 THAT YOUR PARENTS WOULD BE COMING TO LIVE IN THE SAME
5 VILLAGE?

6 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

7 Q DID THAT HELP --

8 A Yes.

9 Q -- KEEP YOU CALMER?

10 A I'm sure, yes.

11 Q ANY IDEA OF WHEN THEY WOULD BE COMING? A
12 LITTLE LATER, OR DID THEY SAY?

13 A I think it was very, very, quick following;
14 just not exactly together, yeah.

15 Q SO THERE YOU WERE IN THIS -- WAS IT A LARGE
16 HOUSE WITH THE FAMILY?

17 A I have a picture of it, yeah.

18 Q WITH THE CHILDREN?

19 A It was comfortable house with a big
20 living-dining room sort of, and it was very simple as far as
21 they had a pump --

22 Q UH-HUH.

23 A -- for water and for heat. It was a bit -- a
24 stove.

25 Q WHAT IS IT A FARM FAMILY OR A --

1 A They had a small farm, just for their own use.

2 Q UH-HUH.

3 A Particularly during the war, I guess, they used
4 it more for their own than they might at other times.

5 But the husband was what you might call an
6 obstetrician for cows. He was not a veterinarian.

7 Q UH-HUH.

8 A But he especially helped cows and animals
9 deliver.

10 Q ANIMAL HUSBANDRY?

11 A Yeah.

12 Q AND WERE THEY -- WERE THEY IN -- WHAT FINANCIAL
13 CONDITION WERE THEY? OF MODEST MEANS OR MIDDLE CLASS, WOULD
14 YOU THINK, OR --

15 A Oh, middle class. Too many elderly kids went
16 out to work. Nobody went to study or so, so -- but, yeah,
17 there was -- people certainly were comfortable as far as
18 clothes and home and so on.

19 Q UH-HUH.

20 A And food. The food was --

21 Q THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY -- THIS IS A TINY
22 TOWN, I WOULD GATHER.

23 A Yeah.

24 Q IT WAS A FARM COMMUNITY?

25 A Right. We were surrounded by fields.

1 Q AND HIS OCCUPATION WAS CONNECTED WITH
2 AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY?

3 A Animals; yeah.

4 Q UH-HUH. RIGHT. AND THE CHILDREN RANGE
5 ROUGHLY, IF YOU CAN RECALL, FROM WHAT AGE?

6 A The youngest was five and I think the oldest
7 was 21 --

8 Q UH-HUH.

9 A -- at the time when we came.

10 Q STILL AT HOME AT THAT AGE?

11 A The 21 year old wasn't any more, or was gone
12 most of the time. Yeah, I think so. And some of the --

13 Q WHAT WERE THE NAMES OF THIS FAMILY -- THE
14 PARENTS -- IF YOU CAN RECALL?

15 A Gerrit and Gerrigge van der Streek.

16 Q AND THEY LIVED HOW FAR WHEN YOUR PARENTS
17 FINALLY ARRIVED?

18 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

19 Q HOW SOON DID YOU KNOW THAT?

20 A I believe we heard right away.

21 Q RIGHT AWAY?

22 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

23 Q UH-HUH. DO YOU KNOW WHO THEY STAYED WITH?

24 A Yeah.

25 Q THOSE NAMES?

1 A Another -- I believe the name was van der Kerk.

2 Q WHAT WAS THEIR SITUATION IN LIFE?

3 A Well, we didn't see them very often once we --
4 even though they were there because adults caught more
5 notice -- more strange adults were noticed in a small
6 village where everybody knows everybody else, and it wasn't
7 unusual for children from the cities to come to the country
8 to be fed, to have something more to eat than they would in
9 the city.

10 Q UH-HUH.

11 A Also, my sister and I were quite blonde and
12 looked, you know, not particularly Semitic, while my mother,
13 at least, was more -- was darker -- and just the fact that
14 they were strange adults, would have been noticed.

15 Q UH-HUH.

16 A So --

17 Q THE OCCUPATION OF THE FAMILY OR THE PARENTS
18 WERE --

19 A He was a farmer, I believe.

20 Q A FARMER?

21 A Yeah.

22 Q DID YOU EVER GET A SENSE OF WHY THESE TWO -- AS
23 FAR AS YOU KNOW, WERE OTHER FAMILIES IN THE VILLAGE -- I'LL
24 SAY VILLAGE --

25 A Yeah. That's right.

1 Q AS FAR AS YOU KNOW, WERE OTHER FAMILIES
2 SHELTERING KIDS?

3 A Yeah. Right.

4 Q AND PARENTS, ALSO?

5 A Right. Yeah.

6 Q VERY MANY OF THEM?

7 A I think quite a few. There was at least one
8 other family on our street -- on that little side street --
9 had another family there, yeah.

10 Q REALLY? UH-HUH. ANY IDEA -- DID YOU EVER HEAR
11 THEM SAY WHY THEY CHOSE TO DO THIS?

12 A I think they were -- religion. They were
13 Calvinistic reformed, yeah.

14 Q AND --

15 A And they felt --

16 Q THAT YOU WERE BEING BADLY TREATED?

17 A Uh-huh. Yeah. That -- yeah. That they should
18 keep us from that kind of harm, yeah.

19 Q WERE THERE OCCUPYING TROOPS NEARBY OR DID YOU
20 SEE?

21 A Yes.

22 Q THE GERMANS OR -- THAT IS -- OR NAZIS? DUTCH
23 NAZIS?

24 A Not all the time. Oldebroek also had a --
25 maybe you might call it an Army depot -- not near the town,

1 but on the outskirts. So there were Germans around every
2 once in awhile and sometimes --

3 In fact, at one time they had -- they were
4 quartered right in the village, too, and they even came to
5 our house to the -- where we lived then and used to use the
6 pump. Use the water.

7 Q UH-HUH.

8 A And I think they even were in the house, yeah.

9 Q UH-HUH.

10 A At times. Not continually, and not sleeping
11 there, but walking in.

12 Q UH-HUH.

13 A At times.

14 Q DID THEY EVER ASK QUESTIONS, TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE,
15 OR WONDER IF -- IN ANY WAY SUSPECT THAT YOU WERE NOT PART OF
16 THE TEN CHILDREN THAT THESE --

17 A Luckily, I don't remember that, no.

18 Q YOU DON'T RECALL BEING APPREHENSIVE ABOUT IT?

19 A Yes. Oh, certainly, I do remember being
20 apprehensive and also being cautious, not --

21 Also, in the village, they had a different
22 dialect. They didn't speak the way we did in the city.

23 Q YES.

24 A So that was something that we --

25 Q WERE YOU WARNED TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH CLOSED?

1 A Yeah. Or quickly -- we quickly assimilated
2 that dialect, too, but, still, I think for people who knew
3 the dialect, the Germans probably wouldn't have known the
4 difference, really, unless somebody could pretend to be a
5 German. So there was all kinds of caution. We were always
6 cautious.

7 Q WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT BEING
8 CAUTIOUS? WHAT WERE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT YOU WERE
9 TOLD? THE DIALECT WOULD BE ONE, OF COURSE.

10 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

11 Q ANY MANNERISMS OR ANY SORT OF THE WAY YOU WERE
12 SUPPOSED TO BEHAVE? WERE YOU TOLD MAYBE NOT TO STOP TOO
13 MUCH SO THAT PEOPLE WOULDN'T NOTICE YOU?

14 A Oh, yeah. I would think so.

15 Q UH-HUH. AND YOU WERE DRESSED IN THE CLOTHING
16 JUST LIKE THE CHILDREN?

17 A Yeah, yeah.

18 Q AND DID YOU SAY THEY WERE NOT GOING TO SCHOOL?
19 WAS THERE SCHOOL THERE FOR YOU?

20 A Not for me because my age was such that they
21 couldn't account for me in case somebody should inquire.

22 They put all the children's names in the Bible
23 that was going to -- I don't know. They must have had an
24 official record somewhere else, I would think, but by
25 putting people in the Bible, that sort of meant that you

1 were there.

2 And my sister was quite small. She had been
3 ill, and even though she was older than the youngest kids,
4 they put her in the Bible as a younger child.

5 Q UH-HUH. DO YOU KNOW WHAT NAME THEY USED?

6 A It was Eda and Thea. We kept our first names,
7 yeah, but our last names we changed --

8 Q UH-HUH. (YES)

9 A -- in case somebody asked.

10 Q THEY PUT HER IN THE FAMILY BIBLE?

11 A Yeah, yeah. And they gave me the name of Thea
12 Marce, is what I was called, or to call myself.

13 Q THAT'S YOUR MIDDLE NAME?

14 A No. Mendels is -- was my last name, and I had
15 to use -- if in case somebody should have asked me my name,
16 I would have said Marce instead of Mendels.

17 Q UH-HUH. SO THAT WAS -- PUTTING YOUR SISTER IN
18 THE FAMILY BIBLE --

19 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

20 Q -- WAS A THING OF SOME EMOTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
21 FOR YOU.

22 A Yeah.

23 Q WOULD YOU SAY?

24 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

25 Q IT WAS MORE OR LESS A SYMBOL OF ADOPTION.

1 A Right; right.

2 Q AND YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE A LITTLE OLDER
3 AND YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED -- HOW THEY WOULD EXPLAIN
4 YOU?

5 A Yeah. No. Well, they did say that we were
6 children from the city, also, who had come to the country.
7 They have -- they had had had children there just for that
8 reason, I believe.

9 Q NON-JEWISH CHILDREN?

10 A Yeah. They also --

11 Q FOR THE NOURISHMENT? FOR THE FOOD?

12 A Uh-huh. They also had people -- students --
13 come who studied with Van der Streek to learn this ob --
14 animal obstetrics.

15 Q UH-HUH.

16 A So there were many different people in the
17 family and people going and coming and they rented rooms to
18 others, so it -- we felt, you know, we sort of could lose
19 ourselves in all the people there.

20 Q YOU HAD A GOOD DEAL OF COMING AND GOING?

21 A Yeah; uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yeah.

22 Q AND HOW OFTEN DID YOU SEE YOUR PARENTS?

23 A It might have been every -- in the beginning,
24 maybe every two months or so.

25 Q OH, REALLY?

1 A I suppose, you know, soon after we got there I
2 think they came over and they saw, you know, where we were
3 and we saw where they were.

4 Q UH-HUH.

5 A Then later on we would go to them rather than
6 them coming and being more noticeable --

7 Q WERE THEY --

8 A -- to us.

9 Q -- KEPT INDOORS MORE OR LESS?

10 A Yeah.

11 Q WHEN YOU WENT TO SEE THEM, WERE YOU ALWAYS
12 INDOORS?

13 A Yeah. And when they came to us, we always got
14 together indoors, yeah.

15 Q BASICALLY THEY RARELY APPEARED, IF EVER, ON THE
16 STREETS --

17 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

18 Q -- OF THE TOWNS.

19 A Oh, yeah. Because they lived out of the
20 village, too. They didn't live in the actual villagy part.
21 It was more on the outskirts.

22 Q DID YOU EVER HEAR THEM SAY THAT THEY GET
23 OUTSIDE AT ALL FOR EXERCISE OR ANYTHING?

24 A No. I had the feeling that they did move
25 around outside.

1 Q DO YOU KNOW WHETHER THERE WERE ANY -- WAS YOUR
2 FAMILY ABLE TO PAY THEM ANYTHING FOR THIS?

3 A I don't know if my family did or whether the
4 Underground did. I think there was some sort of
5 compensation, at least for awhile.

6 Q UH-HUH. DO YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF WHETHER OR
7 NOT IT WAS VERY MUCH OF A SACRIFICE FOR THESE FAMILIES TO
8 TAKE PEOPLE FROM THE CITY LIKE THIS?

9 A Well, I don't know about -- I can only tell
10 about my family.

11 Q UH-HUH.

12 A And they -- no -- I think they really
13 incorporated us very -- rather easily. We slept -- my
14 sister slept with one of the other kids and I slept with one
15 of the other kids.

16 Q UH-HUH.

17 A Of course there were so many there that it
18 wasn't that they had so much space, but space enough.

19 Q UH-HUH.

20 A And food enough. I remember dividing sometimes
21 things very carefully, like, you know, one piece of a
22 orange. I remember that was something of a special treat,
23 and, you know, one person got -- we sort of divided it with
24 all of these people so -- and we were always -- I was -- I
25 did realize that we were very much included in that. That

1 we weren't treated as second class citizens.

2 Q YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE TREATED JUST AS PRETTY
3 MUCH THE SAME?

4 A Yeah; uh-huh.

5 Q DID THEY CONTINUE THEIR -- THEY WERE A DEVOUT
6 FAMILY?

7 A Yes. Yeah. They -- every dinner they had
8 meal? The lunch time was the main meal and they read the
9 Bible every day.

10 Q UH-HUH. AND TO WHAT EXTENT DID YOU
11 PARTICIPATE?

12 A Oh, once in awhile I liked to read it too,
13 yeah.

14 Q DID THEY -- WERE YOU -- I'LL SAY FORCED TO DO
15 THAT OR YOU DECIDED?

16 A Yeah. We sat at the table. We weren't asked
17 if we didn't want to take part of it or not. I'm sure they
18 asked us if we wanted to read. It wasn't ever forced on
19 anybody.

20 Q UH-HUH. (YES)

21 A And we also went to church with them.

22 Q IS THAT RIGHT?

23 A Twice on Sundays.

24 Q UH-HUH.

25 A Yeah.

1 Q UH-HUH. AND --

2 A And that also helped to give a semblance of not
3 being Jewish.

4 Q YES.

5 A Of course.

6 Q YES. THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PART OF THE COVER,
7 AS YOU SAY.

8 A Yeah.

9 Q THEY WERE KNOWN TO BE A DEVOUT FAMILY, OF
10 COURSE. THE VILLAGERS KNEW THAT?

11 A Almost every -- well, I had the impression that
12 almost everybody was there -- not necessarily in the same
13 church. There was another church there, but that going to
14 church on Sundays was done by everybody.

15 Q TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE WAS THERE ANY JEWISH
16 COMMUNITY AT ALL IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD?

17 A No. Not as far as I was aware of at all.

18 Q MOST WERE IN THE CITIES, OF COURSE.

19 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

20 Q AND YOUR PARENTS, WERE THEY -- DID THEY DO
21 SIMILAR THINGS?

22 A No.

23 Q THEY WERE MORE OR LESS CONCEALED?

24 A Right. Right.

25 Q UH-HUH.

1 A Yeah. We could play outside and I made friends
2 with some of the -- actually, it was a relative of the Van
3 der Streek family, and we would take walks, and I mean the
4 activities of the villagers, partially because of the
5 religion, was rather limited.

6 I mean we sang -- the only music that was
7 allowed were psalms and no dancing or -- so taking a walk
8 was one of the activities --

9 Q UH-HUH. THEY WERE -- IT WAS A RATHER --

10 A -- on Sunday afternoon.

11 Q THEY'RE RELIGIOUS, SO YOUR LIFE THERE AS A
12 LITTLE CHILD, YOU FELT PART OF THE FAMILY.

13 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

14 Q YOU SAW GERMANS OCCASIONALLY. THEY WERE
15 SOMETIMES IN THE TOWN?

16 A Yeah.

17 Q AND THEY CAME AND GOT WATER AND USED THE PUMP?

18 A Yeah.

19 Q DID YOUR FEARS GRADUALLY BEGIN TO GROW LESS AND
20 LESS THAT IT APPEARED AS YOU WERE BEING ACCEPTED?

21 A Uh-huh. I think so, yeah. I don't think we
22 lived in a constant fear. In retrospect, I can look at it
23 as at the time I think really my sister and I had a
24 fairly -- a happy existence there.

25 Q UH-HUH.

1 A Because we were able to go out and were
2 accepted by the family and even other people, you know, knew
3 us, but all of them really knew we were Jewish, but it was
4 understood that --

5 Q DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE WERE OTHER PEOPLE IN
6 TOWN WHO WERE JEWISH, ALSO?

7 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

8 Q DID YOU RECOGNIZE THEM AND KNOW THEM WHEN YOU
9 SAW --

10 A Well, this other particular couple, they didn't
11 go out much. They were, I guess, older and maybe more --
12 they were with one family that didn't have so many people
13 going and coming, so they stayed put more.

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A But I was able to, you know, go out, and I
16 helped in the household, since I couldn't go to school, and
17 also with harvesting and things like that. Whatever the
18 whole family did, we did.

19 Q UH-HUH. AND, BASICALLY, YOU RECALL IT AS A
20 REASONABLY HAPPY TIMES.

21 A Yeah.

22 Q YEAH.

23 A Not the sort of thing that you were dreading
24 every day.

25 Q YEAH. YOU KNEW YOUR PARENTS WERE SAFE.

1 A Yeah.

2 Q DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING? AT
3 WHAT POINT DO YOU REMEMBER YOU FIRST REALIZED WHAT WAS
4 HAPPENING ELSEWHERE? THE GERMANS, OF COURSE, INVADED MANY
5 OTHER COUNTRIES.

6 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

7 Q AND DID YOU HAVE A SENSE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING
8 ELSEWHERE IN HOLLAND OR ELSEWHERE TO OTHER JEWS?

9 A Yeah, I did have a sense of that, and also
10 raids began to come in Oldebroek.

11 Q UH-HUH. EXPLAIN; GO INTO --

12 A And also they made a special hiding place for
13 us on the farm when this came closer to Oldebroek; when it
14 wasn't only in the cities any more.

15 Q UH-HUH.

16 A And it was a hiding place made on top of a
17 cupboard. They had this big, walk -- actually, sleep-in
18 cupboards. They used to have beds -- bedsteads, I think
19 would be the word for it.

20 Q UH-HUH.

21 A And they weren't used as bedsteads any more.
22 They were closets, but you could say they had a false
23 ceiling, and on top of that they made a hiding place --

24 Q UH-HUH.

25 A -- for us.

1 Q AND THERE WERE -- YOU KNEW WHAT TO DO IF THE --

2 A Yeah. Actually, at the time, sometimes we
3 slept there just as a matter of caution. Every night we
4 were in there and I -- I can't remember what length of time
5 or what time of -- when that was and if they announced,
6 because somehow the Underground would hear about impending
7 raids.

8 Q UH-HUH.

9 A And during the day, sometimes we would go in
10 there, too.

11 Q UH-HUH. DO YOU RECALL WHAT THE OTHER CHILDREN
12 WERE INSTRUCTED TO DO?

13 A (Shakes head in the negative).

14 Q HOW TO BEHAVE WHEN THERE WAS A RAID?

15 A No.

16 Q AND WERE THEY JUST TO TREAT YOU AS BROTHER AND
17 SISTER AND DO THE USUAL BROTHER AND SISTER THINGS TO YOU
18 AND --

19 A Oh, well, during the raid, no. I -- we would,
20 you know --

21 Q YOU WOULD TRY TO BE CONCEALED?

22 A Yeah.

23 Q UH-HUH.

24 A And the rest of the time, no, they didn't --
25 well, it's hard to know.

1 If they were complete strangers, I suppose we
2 would pretend to be brothers and sisters, but with others it
3 would be children from the city for food.

4 Q UH-HUH. UH-HUH. AND YOU SAY THE RAIDS BEGAN
5 TO COME OUT TO THE VILLAGE.

6 A Yeah.

7 Q DO YOU RECALL ABOUT WHEN THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

8 A No.

9 Q WHAT WERE THE RAIDS?

10 A Well, it was -- it must have been '43. Yeah.

11 Q HOW LONG HAD YOU BEEN STAYING WITH THESE
12 PEOPLE?

13 A A year.

14 Q ABOUT A YEAR?

15 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

16 Q THAT'S WHEN THE RAIDS THEN BEGAN?

17 A Or maybe a little less than a year because we
18 got there in the Summer of '42. And --

19 Q UH-HUH. UH-HUH. SO THEN --

20 A Yeah. Sometime --

21 Q A FEW MONTHS LATER WOULD HAVE BEEN '43.

22 A Yeah.

23 Q DO YOU RECALL WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THE RAIDS?
24 WERE THEY LOOKING FOR JEWS OR WERE THEY LOOKING FOR LABOR OR
25 DO YOU RECALL WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR? MEN? ALL MEN, OR

1 DO YOU RECALL?

2 A No. I think everybody -- anybody Jewish.

3 Q ANYBODY? THEY WERE LOOKING FOR JEWS,
4 SPECIFICALLY.

5 A Yeah.

6 Q UH-HUH. AND THE UNDERGROUND WOULD HEAR OF IT?

7 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

8 Q DO YOU RECALL BEING WARNED ABOUT THIS?

9 A Yeah.

10 Q UH-HUH. AND WHEN THAT HAPPENED, YOU CREPT INTO
11 HIDING PLACE?

12 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

13 Q AND DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR PARENTS WERE? DID
14 THEY HAVE SIMILAR HIDING?

15 A Yeah. They had one in the forest near them.

16 Q UH-HUH. SOME KIND OF DUGOUT, PERHAPS?

17 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

18 Q DID THEY? WHEN THE RAIDS, DID YOU HAVE --

19 A Yeah. That's where they would go to, yeah.

20 Q SO THESE RAIDS, DID THEY EVER CATCH ANYBODY --
21 THE GERMANS -- ON THESE RAIDS? DID THEY EVER DISCOVER --

22 A Yeah, they did. We heard that, and when I also
23 heard that they beat the Oldebroekers.

24 Q WOULD BEAT THEM?

25 A Would beat them, yeah.

1 Q WHAT WAS YOUR FEELING OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO
2 THE VILLAGERS WHO WERE SHELTERING PEOPLE IF THEY HAD BEEN
3 DISCOVERED?

4 A Well, they could be deported, too.

5 Q THAT WAS -- EVERYONE KNEW THAT? COMMON?

6 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

7 Q THERE WASN'T -- YOU DON'T RECALL ANY THREATS
8 LIKE YOU WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY SHOT IF YOU WERE FOUND
9 SHELTERING JEWS?

10 A Well --

11 Q OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

12 A I think I didn't have many illusions about
13 treatment by the Germans.

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A So anything we heard, yeah. Beating, shooting.
16 Anything, I guess, was possible.

17 Q YOU WERE AWARE THAT THE FAMILIES SHELTERING YOU
18 COULD SUFFER THIS SAME THING?

19 A Yeah. That, we knew.

20 Q EVERYONE KNEW THAT?

21 A We knew that, uh-huh.

22 Q UH-HUH. DO YOU RECALL EVER HEARING OR KNOWING
23 OR HEARING YOUR PARENTS TALK ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO
24 PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN DEPORTED -- TO JEWS WHO HAD BEEN SENT
25 EASTWARD? DID YOU EVER GET ANY SORT OF WORD BACK FROM THOSE

1 PEOPLE?

(2 A No, no, no. You didn't get any word back.

3 Q WERE THEY CONSIDERED TO BE DISAPPEARED, IN A
4 SENSE, OR THE MYSTERIOUS FATE NOBODY KNEW? DO YOU RECALL
5 HOW -- WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT ABOUT THAT?

6 A I think you felt that once they were picked up,
7 the likelihood of seeing them would be very small.

8 Q UH-HUH.

9 A Even though you might hope to the contrary.

10 Q DO YOU NOW RECALL WHETHER ANY OF YOUR
11 FRIENDS -- JEWISH FRIENDS -- WERE PICKED UP AND DEPORTED
12 EASTWARD OR SENT TO CAMPS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT? PEOPLE YOU
(13 WOULD HAVE KNOWN BACK, BEFORE?

14 A Yeah. I think that the family of the girl --
15 one of the girl that I had Hebrew lessons with, that she had
16 disappeared. She and her family were gone, and we did hear
17 about it.

18 They were people going, but that was -- I was
19 still in The Hague. Once I went -- I was in Oldebroek --
20 you heard that there had been a raid and they had picked up
21 so many Jews or something like that.

22 But then those were people I didn't know, and
23 we certainly didn't hear about what happened to them.

(24 Q UH-HUH. UH-HUH. WAS THERE A TIME -- WHAT'S
25 YOUR IMPRESSION OF LIFE FOR THE OTHER NON-JEWS ALL AROUND

1 YOU?

2 DO YOU RECALL WHAT -- THE GERMAN REGIME WAS
3 GETTING STRICT AND THEY WERE BEING PUNISHED? WAS THERE
4 UNDERGROUND ACTIVITY? DO YOU HAVE ANY RECOLLECTION?

5 A Yeah, there was Underground activity, and also
6 they were limited. They had to turn in milk. They couldn't
7 keep all the milk that the cows --

8 Q DID THAT AFFECT YOUR FAMILY?

9 A Yeah. They were people who had -- they had
10 to -- I don't know where they had to send it, but I know
11 they had to send it to some sort of general, main gathering
12 place.

13 Q YOUR FAMILY HAD COWS?

14 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

15 Q AND LARGE GARDEN?

16 A Few cows.

17 Q VEGETABLE GARDEN?

18 A Yeah; vegetable garden.

19 Q WHAT DID THE UNDERGROUND DO? WHAT DO YOU
20 RECALL ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES? AROUND WHERE YOU WERE OR
21 WERE THEY DISTANT IN THE BIG CITIES?

22 A No. I don't know of ever seeing anybody,
23 but --

24 Q UH-HUH.

25 A They would -- I mean that was through them that

1 we heard about raids and some of the things that were
2 happening.

3 Q UH-HUH. SO YOU'RE STAYING SORT OF IN TOUCH
4 WITH THE UNDERGROUND? YOU WERE HEARING FROM THEM FROM TIME
5 TO TIME?

6 A The family did, yeah. I was not directly
7 aware of anybody who belonged to the Underground.

8 Q I SEE.

9 A As that person is or isn't.

10 Q YOU PERCEIVED NEWS HAD BEEN FUNNELED THROUGH
11 THE --

12 A Yeah.

13 Q -- THE FAMILY?

14 A Actually, I guess I did know that the brother
15 of Mrs. Van der Streek was involved in the Underground, and
16 I think he was also responsible for us going to the Van der
17 Streek's.

18 Q WAS THERE A TIME WHEN YOUR PARENTS WERE
19 DISCOVERED?

20 A Yeah.

21 Q ABOUT WHEN WAS THAT?

22 A That was in November '43.

23 Q '43?

24 A Yeah.

25 Q UH-HUH. AND WHAT -- HOW DID THAT OCCUR? DO

1 YOU RECALL?

(2 A Well, that day we had gotten a warning that
3 there was going to be a raid, and at the time my sister was
4 in the hospital, but I went into the raid with -- into the
5 raid? In a hiding place of a neighbor, I think, and spent
6 the day there pretty much. That neighbor, the one on the
7 street who had -- they had a family of husband, wife and
8 daughter altogether within there.

9 Q THEY WERE SHELTERING A HUSBAND AND WIFE?
10 ANOTHER FAMILY?

11 A Yeah; uh-huh.

12 Q A JEWISH FAMILY?

(13 A Yeah.

14 Q UH-HUH. FROM THE HAGUE?

15 A No. I don't know where they were from.

16 Q UH-HUH. AND THAT WAS YOUR NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR?

17 A One or two houses down, yeah.

18 Q NEAR YOUR HOUSE?

19 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

20 Q AND, GO AHEAD, THEN. HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?

21 A And there was also -- I think at the same time
22 we also had somebody else staying with us; another Jewish
23 girl.

(24 Q UH-HUH.

25 A And we just spent a day in that hiding place.

1 Q WAS IT A ROOM?

2 A It was larger than the one that we had at home.
3 It was sort of like, I think a little bit like a cellar. I
4 have this sense of going down somewhere.

5 Q UH-HUH. WHY WERE YOU OVER THERE INSTEAD OF
6 YOUR OWN PLACE? DO YOU RECALL?

7 A No.

8 Q IS IT POSSIBLE -- IS IT LIKELY THAT -- IT SEEMS
9 THAT THE VILLAGE -- NOT THE WHOLE VILLAGE, BUT SEVERAL HOMES
10 IN THE VILLAGE -- KNEW THAT OTHER VILLAGERS WERE ALSO
11 SHELTERING?

12 A Yeah.

13 Q AND IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE IF YOU WERE IN THIS
14 HOUSE OR AT ANOTHER FRIENDLY HOUSE NEARBY. DID IT SEEM TO
15 MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE? THEY WOULD WILLINGLY SHELTER YOU,
16 ANYWAY?

17 A Yeah. I really don't know why we were there
18 that day.

19 Q UH-HUH.

20 A Because we didn't go there often, as far as I
21 remember.

22 Q YEAH. OKAY, THEN --

23 A Maybe we -- I don't know. It would have
24 been -- no, you never -- they wouldn't have known how long
25 it would take, no. I don't know why we went there any more.

1 Q CONTINUE WITH TELLING ME HOW YOUR PARENTS WERE
2 DISCOVERED.

3 A Well, we actually -- when I -- when we were
4 told that we could come out of the shelter, we went home and
5 it was almost dinner time and the big good news was that my
6 sister was coming home the next day from the hospital.

7 Q WOULD YOU LIKE SOME WATER THAT'S BEHIND YOU
8 THERE?

9 [Leaves camera crying to get water]

10 Q (SAYS SOMETHING UNINTELLIGIBLE)

11 A Yeah.

12 Q YOUR SISTER WAS -- DO YOU RECALL THE NATURE OF
13 HER ILLNESS?

14 A Well, actually she had scarlet fever during the
15 Summer of '42, and I guess it was -- yeah. We had to wait
16 until the contagious period was over before we could go
17 Underground, and it seems that after that she had a
18 difficulty with her digestion or assimilating food and she
19 didn't grow -- God -- much --

20 [Crying with water] I suppose it kept on for
21 awhile, so actually they decided they should investigate
22 what was wrong with her.

23 Q THAT'S WHY SHE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL?

24 A Yeah.

25 Q AND THEN SHE WAS ABOUT TO COME OUT OF THE

1 HOSPITAL AT THIS POINT?

2 A Yeah.

3 Q UH-HUH. THEN GO AHEAD.

4 A I remember dancing around with the other Van
5 der Streek children -- Oh, God, I can't do this. [Crying]

6 So then we had settled down to dinner and
7 somebody, I think -- I don't know if a stranger came in or
8 somebody said something about -- I think maybe I asked.

9 I think I asked -- I asked if my -- if
10 anything -- my parents were okay, and the mother said, "Oh,
11 you shouldn't ask so much," or something.

12 And then somebody else said something about I
13 hear that they got -- I think -- well, I don't remember
14 exactly what they said, but the realization came to me that
15 my parents had been picked up. [Crying]

16 Q DID YOUR SISTER --

17 A And I -- and I kept -- you know, I just stayed
18 sitting there during dinner and I didn't eat much; I
19 remember that, too. I couldn't eat.

20 I kept up with the normal appearance, but then
21 as soon as dinner was over I was able to leave and I
22 remember wishing that I had been picked up, too, just not to
23 be left.

24 And then -- then the next moment I remember
25 that my sister was coming, so then I had a reason to be

1 there.

2 Q AND DID YOUR SISTER COME?

3 A Yeah. She came home the next day.

4 Q UH-HUH.

5 A But then they also decided that since she was
6 in a weak condition or, you know, not very healthy --

7 Q UH-HUH.

8 A -- that we shouldn't tell her about it --

9 Q UH-HUH.

10 A -- that my parents were gone, so we didn't tell
11 her.

12 Q UH-HUH.

13 A And, of course, she was quite worrying,
14 wondering -- why she didn't hear anything about my parents.

15 Q HOW LONG BEFORE YOU TOLD HER?

16 A I don't really know.

17 Q UH-HUH. DID THE FAMILY THEN TELL -- THE FAMILY
18 YOU WERE STAYING WITH -- THEN TELL YOU THAT -- THE FULL
19 DETAILS OF YOUR PARENTS?

20 A Well, I think I probably got the details fairly
21 soon, and apparently they had come to the house and the
22 Germans or Nazis, whatever -- whatever they were. I always
23 thought Germans. Yeah, I guess it was. Well, I don't know.
24 Germans.

25 They looked for them in the house, didn't find

1 them there, and then they marched immediately to the hiding
2 place outside and the husband -- and there was also a young
3 boy with them who started to run, and they shot the young
4 boy right away.

5 And my parents were taken to Westerborg. I
6 somehow heard. I don't know if I heard it then or whether I
7 heard it later -- that they did go there first.

8 Q UH-HUH.

9 A And it was determined that --

10 Q WHICH IS A -- WHAT'S KNOWN AS A TRANSFER --

11 A Interment, yeah.

12 Q A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WERE GATHERED TOGETHER,
13 UH-HUH. AND THEN DID YOU LATER HEAR MORE?

14 A No. Except that we heard that my parents --
15 that somebody -- somebody had told -- had betrayed them.
16 Had told them that there was a Jewish people there.

17 Q UH-HUH.

18 A And about the hiding place.

19 Q UH-HUH. AND DO YOU BELIEVE THAT? PERHAPS
20 BECAUSE THEY WENT DIRECTLY TO IT.

21 A Uh-huh; yeah. That was -- well, that certainly
22 made it believable.

23 Q UH-HUH.

24 A And --

25 Q UH-HUH. DID ANYTHING HAPPEN TO THE PEOPLE WHO

1 WERE SHELTERING YOUR PARENTS? DO YOU KNOW?

2 A I heard later on that the man there was -- I
3 don't know what happened to him, but the Underground did --
4 well, for lack of a definite description, punish him.

5 Q IT WAS FELT THAT HE MIGHT HAVE TURNED --

6 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

7 Q -- THEM IN?

8 A Yeah.

9 Q ACTUALLY SHELTERING YOUR PARENTS, MIGHT HAVE
10 TURNED THEM IN?

11 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

12 Q ANY IDEA OF WHAT THE PUNISHMENT MIGHT HAVE
13 BEEN?

14 A No.

15 Q UH-HUH. UH-HUH. HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THAT A
16 LOT, I BET? HAVEN'T YOU? WHAT WOULD MOTIVATE A MAN TO TAKE
17 A FAMILY IN AND THEN TO --

18 A No, I can't say that I really --

19 Q IF THAT SHOULD HAPPEN?

20 A No.

21 Q UH-HUH. DID YOU EVER HEAR FURTHER OR HOW LONG
22 YOUR PARENTS WERE IN WESTERBORG OR WESTERBROOK?

23 A Yeah. Actually, I do have the dates somewhere.
24 They were picked up in November and were in Westerborg, I
25 think, until -- in January; sort of the middle or the end --

1 toward the end of January.

(2 Q NOVEMBER '70 -- PARDON. NOVEMBER 1943?

3 A '43.

4 Q UH-HUH.

5 A And they were killed in January '44. The end
6 of January '44.

7 Q UH-HUH. WERE THEY MOVED FROM --

8 A Westerborg, a few days before they were killed.

9 Q TO WHERE?

10 A To Auschwitz.

11 Q TO AUSCHWITZ. HOW DID YOU -- HOW DID YOU HAVE
12 THIS INFORMATION?

(13 A I didn't know. After the war, somebody had
14 seen my parents in Westerborg. One of my other relatives
15 had seen them there, so I knew they were in Westerborg.

16 Q UH-HUH.

17 A And, actually, it wasn't till 1957 or eight --
18 that I actually got official notification with a date and a
19 place.

20 Q UH-HUH. THE POLISH GOVERNMENT?

21 A Or German something. Something written in
22 German.

23 Q I SEE. UH-HUH.

(24 A I think it was German, yeah.

25 Q THEN WHEN YOUR SISTER RETURNED TO YOUR HOUSE --

1 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

2 Q -- FROM THE HOSPITAL AND SHE WAS IN POOR
3 HEALTH AND --

4 A Well --

5 Q -- HOW DID YOUR LIFE CONTINUE AT THAT TIME?

6 A Yeah. She wasn't really in bad health but she
7 just didn't grow, and that was something that they had to go
8 weigh her and see how she was doing.

9 Q WERE YOU GETTING NUTRITION; ENOUGH FOOD TO EAT?

10 A Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

11 Q BECAUSE GROWING CHILDREN NEED A LOT OF FOOD.

12 BUT YOU FELT YOU WERE GETTING --

13 A Oh, yeah.

14 Q -- ENOUGH. HOW WAS YOUR LIFE AFTER THAT? YOU
15 WERE OBVIOUSLY AFFECTED A GREAT DEAL BY YOUR PARENTS HAVING
16 BEEN DISCOVERED. HOW DID LIFE GO FOR YOU AFTER THAT?

17 A Well, I think life, itself, didn't change that
18 much, but we did probably, around that time and after that,
19 slept regularly in the hiding place. That was just natural,
20 of course. That's where we went at night.

21 Q YOU WOULD SLEEP IN IT ALL THE TIME?

22 A Right. And also at one time there were more
23 raids coming, they send me to one of the married daughter's
24 who was living -- well, near Rotterdam, let's say.

25 Q UH-HUH.

1 A So I went away for awhile.

2 Q THE RAIDS BEGAN TO --

3 A Yeah.

4 Q -- MORE OFTEN ONCE -- HOW OFTEN WOULD THEY
5 HAPPEN?

6 A I don't know.

7 Q EVERY WEEK OR SO OR NOT EVERY DAY?

8 A No, I don't think so.

9 Q UH-HUH.

10 A But with enough frequency or -- who knows? I
11 don't know what they had heard from the Underground.

12 Q UH-HUH.

13 A But I know I left for, I think, [a few weeks.]
14 I went to another place. [Actually, six months.]

15 Q STAYED NEAR ROTTERDAM?

16 A Yeah.

17 Q WITH ONE OF THE RELATIVES OF THIS FAMILY.

18 A One of the children.

19 Q DID YOU STILL TRUST THE FAMILY YOU WERE WITH
20 EVEN AFTER YOUR PARENTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETRAYED?

21 A Well, the family I was with?

22 Q YES.

23 A Yeah.

24 Q DIDN'T YOU HAVE -- WHAT HAPPENED OVER HERE IT
25 MIGHT HAPPEN HERE?

1 A No. I never thought -- I never thought that
2 the family would do that. I don't think so, no. We knew
3 that other people might.

4 Q YOU HAD COME TO HAVE A VERY TRUSTING
5 RELATIONSHIP --

6 A Oh, yes.

7 Q -- WITH THAT FAMILY?

8 A Uh-huh. And with several other families
9 related to them.

10 Q UH-HUH.

11 A Yeah.

12 Q UH-HUH.

13 A But we knew that there was always this
14 possibility that we shouldn't irritate -- like, for
15 instance, the people who came into the home for the
16 boarders --

17 Q YEAH.

18 A -- and so on. That they, we were warned --

19 Q UH-HUH.

20 A -- to behave well; not to say anything that
21 they might not like.

22 Q UH-HUH. SO THIS -- YOUR PARENTS IN NOVEMBER
23 OF '43, THEN, HOW DID THINGS GO FOR YOU THEN? HOW LONG DID
24 YOU STAY WITH THIS FAMILY?

25 A Well, the war was over in '45.

1 A No. I never thought -- I never thought that
2 the family would do that. I don't think so, no. We knew
3 that other people might.

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5 RELATIONSHIP --

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14 possibility that we shouldn't irritate -- like, for
15 instance, the people who came into the home for the
16 boarders --

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21 they might not like.

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23 OF '43, THEN, HOW DID THINGS GO FOR YOU THEN? HOW LONG DID
24 YOU STAY WITH THIS FAMILY?

25 A Well, the war was over in '45.

1 Q UH-HUH.

2 A And --

3 Q DID YOU REMAIN THROUGHOUT THE WAR WITH THIS
4 FAMILY?

5 A Yeah, uh-huh.

6 Q NOW THINGS DID HAPPEN, THOUGH, THAT MIGHT HAVE
7 CHANGED THAT. THERE WAS AN INVASION IN 1944, OF COURSE, IN
8 JUNE --

9 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

10 Q -- OF '44, AND THE ALLIED ARMIES APPROACHED
11 SOME AREAS LIKE HOLLAND.

12 DO YOU RECALL BEING AWARE OF THAT AND YOUR
13 FAMILY BEING AWARE OF THAT?

14 A Yeah, we were. We also listened to the BBC.

15 Q BBC? THEY HAD A RADIO?

16 A Radios, uh-huh.

17 Q WERE RADIOS FORBIDDEN?

18 A Yeah. Or listening to the BBC was forbidden,
19 yeah.

20 Q BUT THEY WERE ALLOWED TO RETAIN A RADIO IN THE
21 FAMILY HOME?

22 A Well, I know we hid that --- we hid that radio
23 to which we listened to BBC in the second hiding place
24 exactly comparable to ours. There were two on the other
25 side of the stairs and they listened to it in that place.

1 Q WAS THAT AN EVENING RITUAL OR A CERTAIN TIME OF
2 THE DAY TO LISTEN TO THE RADIO LIKE THAT? DO YOU RECALL?

3 A No, I don't remember.

4 Q I ASSUME THE BROADCAST, OF COURSE, CAME PRETTY
5 MUCH THE SAME TIME.

6 A Yeah.

7 Q I PRESUME THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY. DO YOU
8 RECALL ANY SORT OF THING THEY MIGHT HAVE HEARD ON THE NEWS,
9 I GUESS?

10 A Not to my knowledge.

11 Q UH-HUH. YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF -- THAT THEY
12 WERE --

13 A Coming closer and so on, yeah.

14 Q YES, UH-HUH. YOU WEREN'T AWARE THAT THEY MAY
15 HAVE BEEN SENDING MESSAGES TO THE UNDERGROUND OVER THE BBC
16 BROADCAST OR ANYTHING?

17 IS THAT SOMETHING THAT A TEN OR 12 YEAR OLD
18 GIRL WOULD BE AWARE OF IN THOSE DAYS?

19 A Well, I don't remember it, really.

20 Q UH-HUH. SO, ANYWAY, THE FAMILY WAS --

21 A Some of them would listen to it. Not the whole
22 family. One or two people would go into that place.

23 Q SO YOU WERE AWARE THAT THE ALLIED ARMIES WERE
24 COMING CLOSER --

25 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

1 Q -- TO HOLLAND. DID THAT CHANGE YOUR LIFE IN
2 ANY WAY?

3 A No.

4 Q IT DIDN'T CREATE ANY MORE FREQUENT RAIDS ON THE
5 PARTS OF THE GERMANS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

6 A No, I don't think so. There was -- during the
7 time that I had been gone and after that, I was allowed to
8 come back, so I think probably things were less threatening
9 then.

10 Q UH-HUH. YOU STAYED WITH THE FAMILY IN
11 ROTTERDAM, YOU SAY?

12 A Next to it, yeah. Nearby.

13 Q DID YOU GET OUT AT ALL -- OUT OF THAT FAMILY
14 HOME?

15 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

16 Q OR OUT IN THE CITY AT ALL?

17 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

18 Q WHAT DID YOU SEE? DID YOU NOTICE DAMAGE?

19 A Oh, I didn't go to Rotterdam.

20 Q THIS WAS NOT IN ROTTERDAM?

21 A No.

22 Q BUT NEAR IT?

23 A Yeah.

24 Q UH-HUH. AND THAT WAS A RELATIVE OF THE FAMILY
25 YOU WERE STAYING WITH?

1 A Daughter.

2 Q YEAH. WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE FOR THOSE THREE
3 WEEKS AT ROTTERDAM? WAS IT A DIFFERENT KIND OF FAMILY?

4 A Yeah. It was not a farm family and they lived
5 with the husband's parents. They had a little baby.

6 Q UH-HUH.

7 A So that was kind of nice to --

8 Q OF COURSE BY THIS TIME WERE YOU 12 YEARS OLD OR
9 SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

10 A In '43? It was '44, wasn't it?

11 Q '43. WHAT? FIFTEEN? NO, YOU WERE BORN IN --

12 A I was 13 then.

13 Q THIRTEEN?

14 A Yeah.

15 Q UH-HUH. SO YOU WERE GETTING TO BE A YOUNG
16 LADY --

17 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

18 Q -- IN THOSE DAYS. AND YOU WERE INTERESTED IN
19 BABIES?

20 A Well, yeah. It was nice. I think it was a
21 nice diversion; something else. The household -- you know,
22 I also helped there, but I didn't do anything specific.

23 Again, didn't go to school, so my days were
24 pretty much inside except that I could go out once in awhile
25 to the store or something like that.

1 Q UH-HUH. AND DID YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF -- AS
2 YOUR -- YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE SENSED THAT YOU WERE IN
3 THE LATTER STAGES OF THE WAR AT THAT POINT. YOU MIGHT NOT
4 HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THAT AS A YOUNG GIRL.

5 BUT DID YOU HAVE ANY SENSE THAT THERE WAS --
6 THERE HAD BEEN A LOT OF THINGS HAPPENING TO THE JEWISH
7 POPULATION OF HOLLAND? A LOT OF PEOPLE --

8 A Well, yeah. Well, again, in general, yes, but
9 not specifically. I didn't know anything about my family;
10 what had happened to them.

11 Q UH-HUH. YOU HAD AN EXTENDED FAMILY BEYOND
12 YOUR PARENTS, OF COURSE.

13 A Yeah.

14 Q DID YOU HAVE LOTS OF UNCLES AND AUNTS?

15 A I had aunts, cousins, uncles.

16 Q DID YOU HAVE ANY WORD ABOUT THEIR --

17 A Huh-huh. No.

18 Q DID YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO THINK THEY'D BEEN
19 SENT AWAY? DEPORTED TO CAMPS?

20 A I had no particular reason to know that.

21 Q UH-HUH.

22 A Or -- but --

23 Q YOU JUST GOT NO DEFINITE WORD ON THAT?

24 A Yeah. I mean we couldn't contact them, of
25 course. There was no communication with anybody, so I

1 didn't know what was happening to anybody.

(2 Q YES.

3 A No, no.

4 Q SO YOU THINK IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE DANGER THAT
5 YOU WERE SENT AWAY TO A FAMILY IN ROTTERDAM?

6 A Yeah.

7 Q AND BECAUSE THE DANGER HAD LESSENERED, YOU CAME
8 BACK?

9 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

10 Q UH-HUH. WAS IT DIFFICULT TO TRAVEL THAT
11 DISTANCE?

(12 A I went on the back on a motorcycle. A friend
13 took me over and back. [See Addendum]

14 Q UH-HUH. A FRIEND FROM THE VILLAGE THERE?

15 A Yeah. Or it might have been one of the men who
16 was staying with the Van der Streeks or a friend who had a
17 motorcycle.

18 Q UH-HUH.

19 A So it --

20 Q GASOLINE TO BUY?

21 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

22 Q WERE YOU NOTICING SHORTAGES OF THINGS IN THOSE
23 DAYS, SAY IN '44?

(24 A Yeah. Things like clothes.

25 Q UH-HUH.

1 A They had a few sheep and so they use wool. I
2 mean they use the wool to make into a yarn, and from the
3 yarn we made socks and things like that.

4 Q THE FOOD WAS HOLDING OUT STILL?

5 A Yeah.

6 Q YEAH?

7 A Yeah. They had some pigs.

8 Q BECAUSE YOU WERE ON A FARM?

9 A They had -- yeah. They had some grains and
10 they had vegetables.

11 Q AND YOU SAY SOME OF THE FOOD WAS TAKEN OR SENT
12 TO --

13 A Yeah.

14 Q THAT DIDN'T INCREASE TO THE POINT THAT -- WHERE
15 IT WAS --

16 A No.

17 Q -- DIFFICULT FOR TO YOU EAT OR ANYTHING?

18 A No.

19 Q DO YOU RECALL THE WINTER OF -- WELL, THE WINTER
20 OF 1943, '44 WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN A VERY BITTER WINTER.

21 A Uh-huh. Yeah.

22 Q AND THE GERMAN SEIZED A LOT OF FOOD STUFFS THAT
23 CAUSED VERY HARSH FOOD SHORTAGES, PARTICULARLY IN THE
24 CITIES, I THINK.

25 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

1 Q DO YOU RECALL ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR LIFE THAT
2 WOULD REFLECT THAT?

3 A I do remember that there wasn't -- the stores
4 weren't well-supplied with things.

5 Q UH-HUH.

6 A But as far as personally, they always had a lot
7 of people around the table, and the portions may not have
8 been huge, but there was always -- there was always food.

9 Q SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY?

10 A Yeah.

11 Q ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT -- DO YOU HAVE ANY
12 MEMORIES AT ALL ABOUT ANY SUCH ACTIVITY AS GENERAL STRIKES;
13 RESISTANCE ACTIVITIES TO THE GERMANS? TO THE NAZIS? THESE
14 THINGS WERE A LITTLE BIT ADULT.

15 A Railroad strikes, I think.

16 Q UH-HUH. DO YOU HAVE ANY -- DID YOU EVER HEAR
17 OF ANYTHING LIKE HOSTAGE TAKING OR THE GERMANS SENT BECAUSE
18 OF RESISTANCE ACTIVITY?

19 A Rounding up people.

20 Q ROUNDING UP PEOPLE. SHOOTING THEM.

21 A Yeah, I heard about that. I don't know if that
22 was now when we were in Oldebroek already. I think it was
23 earlier when we were still in The Hague. Yeah, that must
24 have been part of the reason why.

25 Q UH-HUH. THERE WAS VERY EARLY ON A GENERAL

1 STRIKE IN THE AMSTERDAM AREA IN THREE CITIES. IT WAS
2 CRUSHED VERY HARSHLY, AND AS A RESULT OF THAT THE FIRST
3 DEPORTATIONS OCCURRED.

4 ABOUT 600 PERSONS WERE SENT AWAY AND OBVIOUSLY
5 EVERYBODY IN THE COUNTRY WOULD HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THAT, AND
6 THAT MIGHT BE A REASON YOUR PARENTS DECIDED --

7 A Yeah.

8 Q -- TO MOVE. AT ANY RATE, YOU AND YOUR SISTER
9 ARE STILL THERE AND IT'S GETTING ON INTO 1944, ISN'T IT, AND
10 YOU STILL FEEL YOU'RE STILL SAFE THERE OR FEELING SAFE THERE
11 AND THE ALLIED ARMIES ARE APPROACHING AND YOU ARE AWARE OF
12 THAT?

13 A Yeah, uh-huh.

14 Q AND WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE? WERE YOU EXCITED ABOUT
15 THAT OR WERE THE FAMILY OR THE FAMILY MEMBERS, WHERE YOU
16 WERE STAYING, WERE THEY EXCITED ABOUT THAT?

17 A Yeah. I think you had this anticipation and
18 hope that it will -- they would keep coming --

19 Q UH-HUH.

20 A -- closer and get there.

21 Q UH-HUH. DID THEY NOTICE ANY DIFFERENCE ON THE
22 PART OF THE GERMANS AT ALL AS FAR AS YOU CAN REMEMBER?

23 A No, I don't remember that, as far as the
24 Germans that were around the village, anything particular.

25 Q OKAY. THERE WAS A LARGE -- THE ARMIES THAT

1 WOULD BE THE NEAREST TO HOLLAND WOULD BE THE BRITISH ARMIES,
2 AS YOU KNOW.

3 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

4 Q THERE WAS AN AIR DROP OF BRITISH PARATROOPERS.
5 THAT IS ARNHEM.

6 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

7 Q WAS THAT A FAMILIAR CITY TO YOU IN THOSE DAYS?
8 IT WASN'T TOO CLOSE TO WHERE YOU WERE, BUT I WONDERED IF YOU
9 MIGHT --

10 A Well, not all that far away, either, but, no, I
11 didn't know the city at all.

12 Q YOU DIDN'T KNOW --

13 A Huh-huh. (No)

14 Q WERE YOU EVER AWARE THAT THIS BRITISH RAID ON
15 ARNHEM -- THIS BRITISH PARATROOPERS?

16 A I don't recall that particularly, no.

17 Q SO THEN HOW DID IT GO THE REST OF THE TIME?
18 SORT OF DESCRIBE HOW YOU AND YOUR SISTER -- WE'RE GETTING
19 PRETTY NEAR THE END OF THE WAR AND YOU WERE AWARE THAT THE
20 ALLIES --

21 A Well, of course, the sooner the better. The
22 more there might be a chance our parents would come back,
23 the sooner the war would be over.

24 Q YEAH. AND SO HOW DID IT OCCUR? DID THE WAR
25 JUST FINALLY COME TO AN END?

1 A Yeah; in '45 --

2 Q YEAH.

3 A -- it did, and the Canadians who were --
4 liberated us.

5 Q IS THAT RIGHT?

6 A Yeah. And then we had some Canadians staying
7 with us.

8 Q DO YOU RECALL WHEN THAT WAS, WHEN YOU WERE
9 LIBERATED?

10 A I think it was the 15th of May in '45.

11 Q IN 1945?

12 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

13 Q IT WAS -- HOLLAND REMAINED OCCUPIED? PARTS OF
14 HOLLAND?

15 A Yeah.

16 Q RIGHT UP UNTIL THE VERY END. THAT IS, THE
17 ALLIED ARMY SIMPLY BY-PASSED MUCH -- LARGE PARTS OF HOLLAND?

18 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

19 Q WERE YOU AWARE AT ALL THAT THE RUSSIANS OR THE
20 ALLIED TROOPS WERE APPROACHING BERLIN? WE'RE NEARLY --

21 A I don't know what I was aware of then.

22 Q ALRIGHT. THOSE ARE A LITTLE BIT TECHNICAL
23 QUESTIONS, BUT OKAY. YOU WERE HAPPY THAT THE WAR WAS
24 COMING TO AN END.

25 A Uh-huh (Yes).

1 Q AND THEN THE CANADIANS CAME?

2 A Yeah.

3 Q WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THEY CAME TO TOWN? WAS
4 THERE --

5 A Oh, big celebration.

6 Q UH-HUH.

7 A Yeah.

8 Q EVERYONE WAS HAPPY OR JUST MOST --

9 A Well, as far as I know, yeah.

10 Q UH-HUH. CELEBRATION LIKE WHAT?

11 A Oh, decorations and the church bells peeling
12 out.

13 Q YEAH.

14 A Yeah, I remember that.

15 Q WHAT DO YOU RECALL? WHY DO WE HAVE TO HIDE ANY
16 MORE? DO YOU RECALL WHAT YOU WERE THINKING?

17 A No. I think we were focused on our parents
18 coming back.

19 Q YEAH. AND YOUR SISTER IS GETTING BETTER,
20 PERHAPS.

21 A Uh-huh. Yeah, she --

22 Q UH-HUH. SO -- OKAY. THE CANADIANS ARE THERE
23 THEN. HOW DID YOUR LIFE -- WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR LIFE? DID
24 IT GO AHEAD PRETTY MUCH THE SAME OR DID IT CHANGE?

25 A No. It continued to really -- now I could go

1 to school, so I started school then.

2 Q UH-HUH.

3 A Which was in --

4 Q THERE?

5 A Actually, in a neighboring little town.

6 Q UH-HUH.

7 A And there were several of people about my age
8 and we would go on a truck or some hitchhike or something.

9 Q UH-HUH.

10 A And that was, you might call -- well, it was
11 not a lycee or gymnasium or anything like that. It was a
12 little less advanced. Something after. It was in-between
13 grade school and that.

14 Q YOUR EDUCATION HAD ACTUALLY --

15 A Stopped.

16 Q -- BEEN STOPPED?

17 A Yeah.

18 Q DURING WHAT? ABOUT THREE YEARS THERE --

19 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

20 Q -- DURING THE WAR?

21 A Yeah.

22 Q BECAUSE THEY JUST THOUGHT IT WAS TOO DANGEROUS
23 FOR YOU TO GO?

24 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

25 Q WAS THERE ANY EDUCATION THAT CAME OR

1 INSTRUCTION OR ANYTHING THAT --

2 A Oh, yeah. Oh, not in the home, but one of the
3 teachers did give me some private --

4 Q UH-HUH.

5 A -- private lessons for awhile.

6 Q GENERAL SCHOOL SUBJECTS?

7 A Yeah.

8 Q SHE WAS NOT A JEWISH TEACHER?

9 A No. He was not.

10 Q UH-HUH. HE WAS NOT?

11 A No.

12 Q AND THERE WAS NO JEWISH INSTRUCTION DURING
13 THIS --

14 A No.

15 Q -- THREE-YEAR PERIOD OF TIME? UH-HUH. SO YOU
16 WERE JUST BASICALLY -- YOUR EDUCATION WAS STOPPED UNTIL
17 AFTER THE LIBERATION?

18 A Yeah, uh-huh. Right.

19 Q AND WAS IT ASSUMED, THEN, THAT YOU WOULD JUST
20 CONTINUE TO LIVE THERE WITH THIS FAMILY ALREADY OR DO YOU
21 KNOW?

22 A Yeah. They had said that they would be willing
23 to keep us, actually, as their children.

24 Q UH-HUH.

25 A I had an uncle in -- no, that wasn't really

1 assumed. Before we even went underground we knew my aunt
2 and uncle who had left Holland were in California.

3 Q UH-HUH.

4 A And that their address we had memorized and we
5 had been told that we should get in touch with them after
6 the war. So --

7 Q WHERE WERE THEY?

8 A In San Mateo.

9 Q OKAY. GO AHEAD.

10 A So that was the plan. It took -- of course, it
11 took awhile for people to know where we were, for us to get
12 in touch with them.

13 Q DID YOU WRITE THEM?

14 A Yes. They found us through the Red Cross.

15 Q UH-HUH. YOU WERE STILL THERE?

16 A In Oldebroek. Yeah, I was there till we came
17 to San Mateo.

18 Q SO WHAT WAS THE DECISION? TO JOIN YOUR AUNT
19 AND UNCLE?

20 A Yeah. That is what my parents had wanted them
21 to do or wanted us to do, but the Dutch farm family had --
22 Van der Streeks had said they would be willing to keep us
23 and I had, you know, actually thought about life -- what I
24 might do there.

25 Q THERE.

1 A There. Also, my parents had -- before we went
2 underground, my mother had said I knew it was going to be a
3 farm. She said I should learn milking cows and so on
4 because I might use that in Israel because we thought if we
5 survived we probably would go to Israel, yeah.

6 Also, I had a brother of my father's who lived
7 in France and he survived the war. They escaped to the
8 South of France, and they were willing to have us, too --
9 offered to have us, too, although it would have been
10 difficult for them.

11 And somebody else, another relative, a cousin
12 of my mother's and her family who lived in Zwolle, that
13 little city -- the bigger city near Oldebroek.

14 Q THEY SURVIVED?

15 A They survived. And we visited them after the
16 war. I guess that was one of the first ways of getting in
17 touch with family was to get to them.

18 Q HOW DID THEY SURVIVE? DO YOU KNOW?

19 A They were all in different places underground.

20 Q UNDERGROUND?

21 A Yeah.

22 Q THEY WERE BEING CONCEALED?

23 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

24 Q UNDERGROUND.

25 A Yeah.

1 Q AND SO YOU HAD SEVERAL RELATIVES, AUNTS,
2 UNCLES; THE ONES IN CALIFORNIA --

3 A Yeah.

4 Q -- FRANCE AND THOSE RELATIVES THERE.

5 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

6 Q AND HOW WAS IT DECIDED WHERE YOU WOULD
7 ULITIMATELY --

8 A Well, that had been my parents' wishes, that we
9 would go to my aunt in California, yeah.

10 Q IN CALIFORNIA? SO --

11 A And it sounded very nice to us.

12 Q DID IT? AND THE RED CROSS GOT YOU TOGETHER,
13 AND THEN WHEN DID YOU LEAVE HOLLAND?

14 A It took a year to get visas and everything
15 together. So then we left in July '46.

16 Q UH-HUH. AND CAME TO SAN MATEO?

17 A Right.

18 Q WAS IT DIFFICULT TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR DUTCH
19 FAMILY?

20 A Well, sure, yeah. And we keep in touch. We
21 have kept in touch. It was a little difficult because our
22 life was so completely different, that I was writing and so
23 on, but we did that.

24 And we went back and visited them in -- 1980
25 was the last time we were in Holland and the mother was

1 still alive.

2 Q YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THEM IN DUTCH?

3 A Yeah, yeah.

4 Q UH-HUH. AND THEY BUT -- PERHAPS DON'T HAVE --
5 DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH?

6 A Yeah. The children. The --

7 Q THE CHILDREN?

8 A Many of them do.

9 Q SO WHEN YOU LEFT THERE AND YOUR SISTER --

10 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

11 Q -- AT THE SAME TIME, YOU GOT ON THE TRAIN TO GO
12 OVER TO THE LARGER CITY. IS THAT HOW IT HAPPENED?

13 A Yeah. I guess we left from Amsterdam or
14 Rotterdam on a boat.

15 Q CAME BY BOAT?

16 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

17 Q AND JUST YOU TWO GIRLS?

18 A There were other children in the same situation
19 as we were who were all going together and somebody American
20 Joint Distribution Committee provided, I think, somebody who
21 accompanied us.

22 There were two people and we, instead of going
23 to -- I think we were supposed to go to New York first, but
24 then we went -- they had orders that they could only open
25 after they had been at sea for a certain amount time, and

1 then we went to Lake Charles, Louisiana instead.

2 Q REALLY?

3 A And then we went by train from Lake Charles to
4 San Francisco.

5 Q THEY HANDLED THE ARRANGEMENTS? PUT YOU ON THE
6 TRAIN?

7 A Yeah. Somebody met us, I think, in Los Angeles
8 and transferred us. They were again ladies from the Joint
9 Distribution Committee.

10 Q AND YOU ARRIVED HERE SOMETIME IN 1946?

11 A Yeah. In the Summer.

12 Q THEN WHAT HAPPENED TO -- WHAT WAS YOUR LIFE
13 LIKE THEN? WHAT -- WAS YOUR AUNT IN SAN MATEO?

14 A Yeah. She was my mother's sister.

15 Q WHAT DOES SHE -- WHAT WAS HER OCCUPATION?

16 A She was a pediatrician.

17 Q UH-HUH.

18 A Yeah.

19 Q AND YOU AND YOUR SISTER LIVED --

20 A Lived with her and her husband and their two
21 daughters, who were very similar ages as we were, so --

22 Q UH-HUH. SO YOU'RE --

23 A And I started high school in San Mateo.

24 Q YOU WERE 15 NOW?

25 A Yeah. I started high school there.

1 Q WITHOUT ANY ENGLISH?

2 A Well, I had started -- once I started school in
3 Holland again, I started learning English and French and
4 German, so --

5 Q UH-HUH.

6 A -- I had English once a week and knew some of
7 it.

8 Q WHEN YOU BEGAN HIGH SCHOOL, PUBLIC HIGH
9 SCHOOL --

10 A Yeah.

11 Q -- DID YOU FEEL YOU WERE EQUAL OR BEHIND OR
12 AHEAD OR WHAT OF THE OTHER --

13 A Well, yeah. I didn't really have that much
14 English, I realize, now that you ask me, because I took
15 French which I knew better than English, so that would help
16 me.

17 Q UH-HUH. (YES)

18 A You know, turn things around, and I could
19 understand French, I might know that. I also joined the
20 accappella choir and sang English, which I got used to --
21 yeah. So --

22 Q AND YOU LIKED MUSIC? YOU LIKE TO SING?

23 A Yeah, yeah.

24 Q SO DID YOU PROGRESS NICELY --

25 A Oh, yes.

1 Q -- IN HIGH SCHOOL?

2 A Also, one of the first things we did after we
3 were here, we went to camp with the daughters -- with my
4 cousins to a girl scout camp where the daughters were there
5 if I was -- really needed translations, but I learned
6 English very quickly there.

7 Q WHAT ARE THE NAMES OF YOUR AUNT AND UNCLE AND
8 THEIR CHILDREN?

9 A Well, it was Clara Ganz or Ganz, they would say
10 here, and my uncle is Joseph Ganz, who is still here and the
11 girls, Ida and Yettie, who are both married now.

12 Q I SEE. YOUR AUNT WAS A PEDIATRICIAN?

13 A Right.

14 Q AND WHAT WAS YOUR UNCLE?

15 A He was a lawyer.

16 Q A LAWYER IN SAN MATEO?

17 A He actually worked in San Francisco.

18 Q IN SAN FRANCISCO?

19 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

20 Q AND THEN YOUR SISTER ALSO EVENTUALLY ENTERED
21 HIGH SCHOOL, I GATHER?

22 A Yeah. She went to junior high first and then
23 to high school, yeah.

24 Q AND BOTH OF YOU PROGRESSED THROUGH THAT?

25 A Yeah.

1 Q AND GO AHEAD WITH THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. BRING
2 US UP TO THE PRESENT.

3 A Well, after high school I went to Berkeley --
4 UC Berkeley -- for two years in the pre-nursing program and
5 then moved to the campus -- UCSF campus -- and completed it
6 and met my husband, who was a student physician and married
7 during his internship.

8 Q HE'S A PHYSICIAN?

9 A Yeah. Pediatrician.

10 Q HERE IN THE BAY AREA?

11 A Yeah.

12 Q YOU'RE INCLINED TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION,
13 PERHAPS, BY THE WORK OF YOUR AUNT, WHO WAS A PEDIATRICIAN?

14 A Yeah.

15 Q IS THAT LIKELY?

16 A Oh, yeah, very likely.

17 Q UH-HUH.

18 A That's what happened.

19 Q WHAT IS YOUR HUSBAND'S FULL NAME?

20 A Sam. Samuel Leavitt.

21 Q AND HE IS IN PRACTICE WHERE?

22 A In Burlingame.

23 Q IN BURLINGAME?

24 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

25 Q AND YOUR SISTER NOW? WHERE IS SHE?

1 A She's in Oakland. She's a librarian at Mills
2 College. Reference librarian.

3 Q I SEE.

4 A Yeah.

5 Q UH-HUH. OKAY. AND DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN?

6 A I have a daughter and a son.

7 Q WHAT ARE THEIR NAMES?

8 A Andrea and Robert.

9 Q AND WHERE ARE THEY?

10 A Andrea is also in the neighborhood and works at
11 a doctor's office and -- which is her last job. She
12 hasn't -- it's her first medical environment for her. She's
13 worked many other places.

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A And my son is entering Davis in September.

16 Q UH-HUH. AND YOU STILL ARE OCCASIONALLY, AT
17 LEAST, IN TOUCH WITH THE FAMILY --

18 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

19 Q -- BACK IN --

20 A Yeah. In fact, they're coming -- the youngest
21 daughter of the Van der Streeks is going to visit us this
22 first time. They're coming to stay with us in September.

23 Q IS THAT RIGHT?

24 A Yeah.

25 Q FOR A VISIT?

1 A Right. Yeah.

2 Q UH-HUH. ARE THE PARENTS OF THAT FAMILY
3 STILL --

4 A No. No, they aren't.

5 Q SO IT'S THE CHILDREN NOW YOU'RE --

6 A Uh-huh. One of the children was named after my
7 sister. One of the grandchildren of the Van der Streeks.

8 Q UH-HUH.

9 A Yeah. I think we do feel it. We were sisters
10 and brothers during that time -- brothers and sisters --
11 during that time.

12 Q UH-HUH. CAN YOU -- ARE YOU A DEVOUT FAMILY
13 STILL, OR DO YOU --

14 A No.

15 Q NOT PARTICULARLY RELIGIOUS IN YOUR FAMILY?

16 A No.

17 Q AND YOU SAID THAT, I THINK, THAT YOU GOT SOME
18 WORD IN THE 1950'S --

19 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

20 Q -- ABOUT YOUR PARENTS.

21 A Yeah.

22 Q MAY HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE RED CROSS OR SOME
23 OTHER AGENCY LIKE THAT?

24 A It was, I think, a German concern.

25 Q UH-HUH.

1 A Yeah.

2 Q UH-HUH.

3 A And until that time there was always hope that
4 they would still be -- at least one of them -- alive, so we
5 tried to be realistic and think they probably weren't both
6 alive, but there's this clinging to possibility of one
7 returning.

8 Q UH-HUH. DID YOU -- HAVE YOU EVER ASKED FOR
9 ONE -- ONE OR A NUMBER OF PERSONS ASKED FOR REPARATIONS FROM
10 GERMANY, AND DID YOU RECEIVE THEM?

11 A It was done, sort of for us by other family
12 people. Other family members, yeah.

13 Q AND YOU WERE -- RECEIVED THOSE?

14 A We have received something from Germany,
15 uh-huh.

16 Q THAT CONTINUES, I GATHER. DOES THAT CONTINUE?

17 A Not -- I'm not receiving anything, no.

18 Q COULD YOU -- HOW DO YOU FEEL THIS HAS AFFECTED
19 YOU, PERHAPS PHYSICALLY, IF ANY WAY AT ALL, AND
20 EMOTIONALLY -- THIS EXPERIENCE?

21 A I don't think it has physically affected me,
22 but emotionally I -- I'm sure I've learned to observe
23 people. Not jump in, you know. See, if -- maybe you might
24 say see if the coast is clear, in general.

25 Be more suspicious about names and addresses.

1 I mean as far as not throwing them around, taking them off
2 things that aren't anybody's business, yeah.

3 And also I have a sense that bad things do
4 happen. It's not -- you know, you think it's going to --
5 it's not going to happen to me. That's not --

6 Q YOU HAVE A SENSE THAT IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU?

7 A Yeah. So I may be, in general, more cautious.
8 More anticipate (sic), possibly.

9 Q THAN SOMEONE --

10 A Unpleasant things.

11 Q ANY GUILT AT ALL THAT YOU SURVIVED AND SOME
12 OTHERS DIDN'T?

13 A Not that I'm aware of it, really.

14 Q UH-HUH. WOULD YOU NAME -- I'D LIKE YOU TO
15 NAME YOUR PARENTS, EACH OF THEM, AND YOUR OTHER RELATIVES
16 AND THEN SAY WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM. A SISTER SURVIVED, OR
17 JUST DO IT LIKE YOU WOULD, PLEASE --

18 A Uh-huh. My father was Bernard Mendels. My
19 mother, Arnie Mendels Humpers. They were killed in
20 Auschwitz.

21 [Crying] I can't believe it. I can't do
22 this, how many years later?

23 And Aunt Thea Van Weenen. A cousin. A cousin,
24 Julie van Weenen. [Crying; unaudible].

25 I don't know what happened to them, where they

1 were killed, but they're all gone. Two uncles, Siegmond and
2 Julius Hompes, who used to live close to us. My
3 grandmother, Thekla Mendels.

4 Those are really the immediate family, and I
5 have all sorts of uncles and aunts of my mother, and Martha
6 Jonas and Carl Jonas.

7 Q THESE PERSONS WERE ALL SENT AWAY? YOU DON'T
8 KNOW --

9 A Uh-huh. They all lived in Holland at the time
10 of the war and were killed. Mabel -- no, no. They
11 survived.

12 Q YOU CAN NAME THE NAMES OF THE SURVIVORS, TOO,
13 IF YOU --

14 A Maurits Meiboom and Ala and Ennie Meiboom
15 survived. And Albert Van Weenen survived. Fritz and Ellen
16 Mendels and their children, Manuela and Jacqueline and
17 Franklin survived. They're the ones that were in France.

18 Dora Mendels is still in Holland and Pete
19 Mendels is still in England and Greta Mendels still in
20 Holland.

21 Q WHO WERE THEY?

22 A They were cousins of my father. And then
23 luckily one of those other cousins of my father went to
24 Israel in the early '30's, and so his family is there and
25 his children and grandchildren, who we visit -- met a few

1 years ago.

2 Q UH-HUH. CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE AT ALL
3 THAT YOU WANT TO SAY?

4 DO YOU FOLLOW WHAT'S HAPPENING IN EUROPE NOW
5 AND THE POSSIBILITY OF THE TWO GERMANIES WILL BE UNIFIED?

6 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

7 Q DO YOU HAVE A FEELING OF THAT HAPPENING?

8 A Yeah. I'm not -- somebody -- I know when it
9 first happened, somebody met me and said, oh, isn't it
10 exciting, and I certainly didn't think it was exciting.
11 Exciting in a negative way, maybe, yeah.

12 Q DO YOU HAVE FEARS OF WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO
13 GERMANS IF GERMANS REUNIT?

14 A Yes.

15 Q WHAT --

16 A Well, the possibility -- well, the possibility
17 exists that something like the anti-Semitism would become
18 stronger again and take hold, but then at the same time it
19 doesn't necessarily have to be Germans that would instigate
20 it or perpetrate it, you might say.

21 Q UH-HUH. THE EVENTS IN RUSSIA AND EASTERN AND
22 CENTRAL EUROPE PULLS, ARE THEY PROVOCATIVE TO YOU OR --

23 A In a way of evoking memories and things of that
24 of what happened. In that way, I think, more than what I
25 anticipate and --

1 Yeah, I guess it's scary. It is scary, what's
2 happening in the world, but not only in other countries; in
3 general. I mean it's just the human condition of people.
4 That the world does not become gentler and kinder.

5 Q HAVE YOU TRAVELLED TO EUROPE?

6 A Somewhat, yeah.

7 Q HAVE YOU EVER BEEN INCLINED TO GO TO SOME OF
8 THE PLACES WHERE SOME OF THESE THINGS HAPPENED? HAVE YOU
9 BEEN BACK TO HOLLAND?

10 A Yes; I've been to Holland.

11 Q HAVE YOU VISITED YOUR FAMILY?

12 A The family, right. Yeah. And took my children
13 to meet them.

14 Q UH-HUH.

15 A Yeah.

16 Q AND YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO EASTERN EUROPE AT ALL
17 OR THINGS LIKE THAT?

18 A No.

19 Q ANYTHING ELSE AT ALL THAT YOU WANT TO SAY?

20 A No. I suppose -- I supposed you might sum it
21 up by saying treat your neighbor as yourself. I hope that
22 that's a way to live.

23 Q AND YOU FEEL THAT'S WHAT THOSE PEOPLE IN
24 HOLLAND DID FOR YOU?

25 A Yeah. I'm very grateful that they were able to

1 do this for us. That they gave of themselves to that
2 extent. Taking us in.

3 Q DO YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF WHETHER OR NOT YOU
4 WOULD HAVE SURVIVED IF THEY HADN'T OR SOMEBODY ELSE HADN'T
5 TAKEN YOU IN? DO YOU HAVE ANY FEELING ABOUT THAT?

6 A It seems most likely that I wouldn't be here
7 if somebody hadn't sheltered us and kept us away from the
8 Germans.

9 Q UH-HUH. ANYTHING ELSE AT ALL?

10 A No, nothing that I can think of right now.

11 Q THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

12 CAMERAMAN: GENE, MAY I ASK ONE QUESTION?

13 MR. AYRES: SURE.

14 CAMERAMAN: I HOPE I'M NOT REPEATING SOMETHING YOU
15 TALKED ABOUT EARLIER.

16 HAVE YOU TALKED TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT YOUR
17 EXPERIENCE?

18 A Yes.

19 CAMERAMAN: I'D BE CURIOUS TO HEAR ABOUT THAT A
20 LITTLE BIT.

21 AT WHAT AGES YOU TALKED TO THEM ABOUT IT AND IN
22 WHAT DEGREE OF COMPLETENESS DID YOU TALK TO THEM ABOUT IT OR
23 NOT TALK TO THEM ABOUT IT.

24 AND WERE THEY WILLING AND CURIOUS TO LISTEN OR
25 DID THEY NOT WANT TO HEAR AND DID THEY PERHAPS CHANGE IN

1 THEIR OWN ATTITUDE ABOUT WHETHER THEY WANTED TO HEAR OR DID
2 NOT WANT TO HEAR AT SOME POINT IN THEIR OWN GROWTH.

3 A No, I don't remember any particular time.
4 Luckily, you know, having my aunts and uncle here, I don't
5 know how soon one would wonder about other family, but I
6 told them what had happened and about our years in
7 Oldebroek -- not always in detail -- and as they grow older,
8 with more detail, and, of course, when the time -- when they
9 were old enough to go to Holland with us and then they knew
10 where they were going, whom they were meeting. They saw the
11 hiding place.

12 Their attitude -- well, they certainly feel
13 connected to my experience.

14 CAMERAMAN: ARE THEY EAGER TO UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING
15 THAT HAPPENED TO YOU, OR ARE THEY A LITTLE RELUCTANT TO FACE
16 IT STRAIGHT ON?

17 A I think they face it straight on. They don't
18 have a -- necessarily asked me for all kinds of details, no.

19 But as you noticed, it is hard for me to talk
20 about it at times, and so I -- I didn't go into it very
21 frequently. But there were many times when it does come up
22 and then I wouldn't purposely avoid it or hide it from them.

23 I have also spoken to religious schools in our
24 area when my son was a student in a religious school, and
25 before he became a bar mitzvah, and they asked me if I was

1 willing to do this and so I did.

2 Being able to tell them -- luckily, my
3 experience wasn't one of in-the-camps, so that I was able to
4 tell them of the sort of things that went on that may have
5 been a little bit less publicized and maybe a little bit
6 less well-known.

7 BY MR. AYRES:

8 Q THE HIDING PLACE STILL THERE?

9 A Yeah.

10 Q YOU SHOWED YOUR CHILDREN?

11 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

12 Q DID THEY REACT? WHAT WAS THEIR REACTIONS?

13 A I don't recall particularly.

14 CAMERAMAN: Did you say you had a couple of pictures
15 you brought with us -- brought with you?

16 A Yeah, I do.

17 CAMERAMAN: WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO TAKE A
18 COUPLE OF SHOTS?

19 [Shows pictures]

20 OKAY. SO THIS WAS THE HOUSE YOU WERE HIDDEN
21 IN?

22 A That's where I was for four years.

23 CAMERAMAN: AND, LET'S SEE -- COULD YOU JUST
24 INDICATE WITH YOUR FINGER THE ROOM THAT YOU HAD.

25 A The bedroom was here and there were four us who

1 slept there usually.

2 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. ALRIGHT. AND WHAT YEAR WAS THIS
3 PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN?

4 A It was taken later after we had already left.

5 CAMERAMAN: ON ONE OF YOUR VISITS BACK?

6 A No. Actually, somebody took it for us.

7 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. AND WHO IS THIS, PLEASE?

8 A This is Gerrige Evink Van der Streek, the
9 mother of the family.

10 CAMERAMAN: THAT YOU HID --

11 A Yeah; who hid us.

12 CAMERAMAN: AND WHAT YEAR WAS THIS PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN?

13 A Also quite awhile after we left because she's
14 wearing, might say, called normal clothing. She used to
15 wear farm -- the long skirts and the hat and so on; the
16 traditional peasant costume.

17 CAMERAMAN: AND IS SHE STANDING IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE
18 THAT YOU HID IN?

19 A No. I don't think so.

20 CAMERAMAN: DID SHE CONTINUE TO LIVE IN THAT HOUSE
21 AFTER --

22 A Yeah, for quite awhile, and then one of their
23 children, I believe, took it over.

24 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. AND THIS IS THE SAME HOUSE DURING
25 THE WAR WHILE YOU WERE THERE?

1 A Yeah, the father.

2 CAMERAMAN: AND THAT IS THE FATHER OF THE FAMILY?

3 A Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

4 CAMERAMAN: WHO DO YOU THINK TOOK THIS PHOTOGRAPH?

5 A I don't know.

6 BY MR. AYRES:

7 Q HOW MANY OF THE ROOMS WOULD THEY USE -- TAKE
8 IN -- USED TO TAKE IN BOARDERS?

9 A Just one, but they could -- they had two beds
10 in there so they would have two boarders at a time.

11 Q WELL, ON THE RIGHT, AREN'T YOU?

12 A Uh-huh. First one on the right.

13 Q SO YOU'RE FRONT ROW.

14 CAMERAMAN: This is you right here?

15 A The first one.

16 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. AND YOUR SISTER IS THE SECOND?

17 A Second on the left.

18 CAMERAMAN: SECOND ON THE LEFT. AND THIS PHOTOGRAPH
19 WAS TAKEN IN 1945?

20 A Yeah.

21 CAMERAMAN: IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE WHERE YOU HID?

22 A Right.

23 CAMERAMAN: AND THIS IS THE FAMILY YOU HID WITH AND
24 THEIR --

25 A Children and children-in-law.

1 CAMERAMAN: CHILDREN AND CHILDREN-IN-LAW.

2 A And one grandchild.

3 CAMERAMAN: IN THIS SHOT WE HAVE YOU ON THE BOTTOM
4 RIGHT AND YOUR SISTER ON THE BOTTOM LEFT. OKAY.

5 OKAY, CAN YOU TELL US WHO THIS IS NOW?

6 A That's Leida and Gert Van der Streek taken in
7 school in 1945 in Oldebroek.

8 CAMERAMAN: SO THIS IS THE MOTHER AND THE FATHER
9 AGAIN.

10 A Van der Streek, yeah.

11 CAMERAMAN: IN THEIR SUNDAY BEST.

12 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

13 CAMERAMAN: AND DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YEAR THIS
14 MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

15 A Oh, maybe 1948. Cousin of the Van der Streeks.
16 Her father was a brother of Mrs. Von Straik.

17 CAMERAMAN: AND WHAT WAS HER NAME?

18 A Belie. Belie Evink.

19 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. AND WHAT'S YOUR GUESS ON WHAT
20 YEAR THIS WAS TAKEN?

21 A It probably was 45.

22 CAMERAMAN: WAS THIS AFTER THE WAR WAS OVER?

23 A That, I don't know. Could be. Could very well
24 be, yeah, after the war. Maybe even could have been '46,
25 also. That might have been one of the pictures taken, yeah.

1 This one was '45. It says '45.

2 CAMERAMAN: THIS ONE'S '45?

3 A Uh-huh.

4 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. AND WHO ARE THESE KIDS AGAIN NOW?

5 A That's Gert Jan Van der Streek and Tonia
6 Nagelhout, and I don't know what the third one is who's
7 holding the train.

8 CAMERAMAN: UH-HUH. AND YOU SAY THIS WAS 1947?

9 A 1947.

10 CAMERAMAN: AND THIS IS A WEDDING AND THIS
11 PHOTOGRAPH WAS SENT TO YOU?

12 A Uh-huh. It's a -- yeah. The children playing
13 wedding.

14 CAMERAMAN: UH-HUH. OKAY. THAT'S CUTE. OKAY.
15 AND THIS FELLOW'S NAME IS -- ON THE RIGHT?

16 A That's Arte. His name Gerrit, also. Gerrit
17 Van der Streek.

18 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. AND HE WAS THE SON OF THE FAMILY
19 THAT YOU STAYED WITH?

20 A Yeah.

21 CAMERAMAN: AND THIS IS HIM IN THE ARMY IN
22 INDONESIA?

23 A Right.

24 CAMERAMAN: DURING THE WAR?

25 A No; no. After -- somewhere in -- much later.

1 I don't know what year that they sent that to me. Not -- I
2 don't know when it was, but when you say "the war", it
3 wasn't during --

4 CAMERAMAN: THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS NOT TAKEN DURING THE
5 WAR?

6 A Not during the war that I was involved.

7 CAMERAMAN: WAS IT TAKEN DURING THE WAR IN
8 INDONESIA?

9 A I guess so.

10 CAMERAMAN: MAYBE? WE'RE NOT SURE ABOUT THAT ONE.

11 A No.

12 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. SO THIS IS ACTUALLY -- THIS IS A
13 PICTURE OF YOUR SISTER, EDA, AND --

14 A Uh-huh. (Yes)

15 CAMERAMAN: AND SHE IS THE SECOND PERSON FROM THE
16 RIGHT?

17 A Right, yes.

18 CAMERAMAN: RIGHT THERE. AND THIS IS WITH THE
19 THREE KIDS FROM THE FAMILY THAT YOU WERE HIDING WITH?

20 A Well, two of the children -- Leida on the left.

21 CAMERAMAN: UH-HUH.

22 A And then the one in the middle is a grandchild,
23 I think.

24 CAMERAMAN: I SEE.

25 A And the boy on the right.

1 CAMERAMAN: Okay.

2 A Gerrit Jan. Gerrit Jan on the right and Trynie
3 next to my sister.

4 CAMERAMAN: ANY GUESS ABOUT WHAT YEAR THIS WOULD BE,
5 ROUGHLY?

6 A '45, I would guess.

7 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. OKAY. WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE NOW?

8 A This is Emanuel and Thekla Mendels-Marx. This
9 picture is taken in 1933.

10 CAMERAMAN: SO THEY ARE WHAT RELATIONSHIP TO YOU?

11 A That's my father's parents.

12 CAMERAMAN: YOUR FATHER'S PARENTS? OKAY.

13 A My grandparents.

14 CAMERAMAN: AND WHAT WAS THEIR FATE DURING THE WAR?

15 A They -- my grandfather had already died and
16 grandmother was one of the people who disappeared.

17 CAMERAMAN: OKAY. YOU SAID THIS WAS YOUR PARENTS'
18 WEDDING PICTURE?

19 A Yes.

20 CAMERAMAN: AND WHAT YEAR WAS THIS?

21 A 1929.

22 CAMERAMAN: 1929? AND WHAT TOWN ARE WE IN?

23 A In The Hague Holland.

24 CAMERAMAN: IN THE HAGUE?

25 A Yeah. And Judy Van Weenen, a cousin that --

[END OF FIRST VIDEO]

Q OKAY. THIS IS YOU ON THE LEFT, YOUR SISTER ON THE RIGHT, AND YOUR COUSIN?

A And my cousin, Julie Van Weenen, in the middle.

Q AND HOW OLD DO YOU THINK YOU ARE THERE?

A In 1935?

Q OH, '35?

A I was four and Eda was one, and my cousin was -- oh, maybe 19 or something. Eighteen, yeah.

Q AND THIS IS YOU WITH YOUR ELEPHANT. HOW OLD DO YOU THINK YOU WERE?

A It's at the photographer, so that's, yeah, posed by him.

Q PHOTOGRAPHER'S ELEPHANT.

A Yeah. Oh, what do I look like? Three, maybe.

Q OKAY.

A Two, three. Two or three.

Q THIS IS YOU AGAIN?

A Here's my sister, yeah.

Q THIS IS YOU?

A Yeah. It looks later, yeah.

Q OKAY. THIS IS YOU AGAIN AT WHAT AGE, ROUGHLY?

A Oh, about six, I would guess.

Q OKAY.

A My Shirley Temple dress.

1 Q THIS IS YOUR SISTER, EDA?

2 A Eda, yeah. And she must have been about three.

3 Q THIS IS THE FAMILY ON AUGUST 1939, AND I

4 GUESS --

5 A Right.

6 Q -- YOU ARE THE CHILD ON THE LEFT.

7 A Yeah.

8 Q AND YOUR SISTER'S ON THE RIGHT.

9 A Right.

10 Q AND YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER.

11 A Uh-huh. You want me to mention the names
12 again?

13 Q SURE. WHY DON'T YOU.

14 A Annie Jeanette Mendels-Hompes and Bernard
15 Mendels and Thea and Eda Mendels.

16 Q THIS IS ANOTHER FAMILY PHOTO; SAME GROUP.

17 YOU'RE GUESSING 1942, ROUGHLY.

18 A Uh-huh. I would think, yeah. I think we send
19 it to my family here. I think you can see the effects of
20 the times on my parents when you compare to the other
21 picture.

22 Q THEY'RE LOOKING MORE OVERDRAWN?

23 A Overdrawn.

24 Q AND HAGGARD.

25 A Yeah, I think so.

1 Q OKAY. YOU SAID THIS WAS 1946 IN OLDEBROEK
2 AFTER THE WAR. YOU ON THE LEFT AND YOUR SISTER, EDA, ON THE
3 RIGHT.

4 A Right. It's outside there and next to a house
5 or -- we probably took that picture to send it to our family
6 here.

7 Q WHO YOU EVENTUALLY CAME TO LIVE WITH?

8 A Yeah; live with.

9 Q OKAY. TELL ME WHO THIS IS AGAIN, PLEASE?

10 A This is Ennie Meiboom on the left and Thea and
11 Eda Mendels after the war, probably Spring of 1946, as we're
12 getting ready to come to America.

13 Q OKAY. WHO ARE --

14 A This is Thea and Julie Van Weenen, my aunt and
15 cousin. They also were killed in the war. Just taken away.

16 Q OKAY. TELL US WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE.

17 A This is Manuela on the left, Jacqueline on the
18 right, and Franklin in the middle. These are cousins of
19 mine who lived in France at the time of the war.

20 In fact, the middle little boy was born in 1943
21 while they were in the south of France, hiding there, and
22 survived.

23 Q AND WHERE DO THOSE THREE PEOPLE LIVE NOW?

24 A (No response).

25 [END OF SECOND VIDEO TAPE]

A D D E N D U M

"This October, 1992 -- I met again a sister-in-law of the Van der Streek daughter to whom I was sent at that time."

[Page 77 -- Summer '44]

"I actually shared the bed with her -- Ans de Waard -- for the six months I was there. She told me that she had come to Oldebroek to get me -- and that together we had traveled on one of the last running trains in Holland -- to the city near Rotterdam. Apparently the train was very crowded -- and everyone was standing up together -- no one could move to use toilet facilities. I can't remember this at all --"

"The ride on the motorcycle was another time -- to another daughter -- nearer to Oldebroek."

[Page 77.]