

## **Netherlands Documentation Project Interview Summary**

**RG-50.570\*0014**

**Mr. Rense Kramer**

**Interview Date: December, 20, 2004**

**Location: Noordscheschut, the Netherlands**

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**Short summary:**

Mr. Kramer lived in the small village Foxhol and described the deportation of the Jews.

**Long summary:**

Born in Foxhol, municipality of Hoogezand on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1927. He was only child. His father was a painter, painted boats. They were and still are Christians. The village was not so religious, it was more socialist and communist, SDAP. It was a village of shipbuilders. His mother was German. She came to The Netherlands after WWI to work as a maid.

Because of the German relatives, they were very aware of what was going on in Germany. He remembered hearing about Kristallnacht and Mein Kampf and the concentration camps, and of course the persecution of Jews. They were very involved as a Christian group, because they saw the Jews as God's people. They believed Mussolini was the Anti-Christ. The whole village was very anti-German.

The first month nothing happened.

There were several Jewish families in the village: Nijven, Levi, Simons. They were butchers. People looked down upon them, but people did care about their faith. His teacher, Mr De Lange, a Jew, was sent away from school in 1941.

There was little contact with the butcher families, there was little respect for them. Jews kept themselves on a distance. They were the people of God, they were apart from the rest. When they were taken away it was clear that people sympathized. "If I saw a Jew with a star, then I thought: I have nothing in common, it is a different kind of people."

His father and grandmother did have contact with Jews in the village. They talked with them about religion, but it did not help, the Jews were very strong believers.

Mr. Kramer got extra lessons from a Jewish young man, whom he paid for these lessons. Kramer explains: there was a big distance between Christians and Jews, the Jews had a lid in front of their face (the Dutch expression is: deksel op hun aangezicht).

The Jewish families in the village were self-reliant, they took care of themselves. There were no signs saying "Forbidden for Jews" in the village.

The Jewish men of Foxhol had to go to the municipality in Hoogeveen and were taken away from there. This was something Mr Kramer did not witness. Mr Kramer said: "They were noticed because they were no longer there. We thought they went to East-Germany or Poland. We knew Westerbork. We would sometimes see the trains that went directly from Groningen

to Germany. Not always cattle cars, sometimes they were normal trains.” Mr Kramer remembers that once when he was at the train station in Groningen, the station was closed for public because a train with Jews was leaving. At home in Foxhol, they would take a boat and look at the trains from the boat.

Mr Kramer remembered the deportation of the Jewish women and children from Foxhol. Policeman Melling collected the people. There was crying and a lot of fear. His father talked to the policeman and said goodbye to the Jews. Mr Kramer described the car.

Within a week the houses were emptied, this was in October 1942. When the Jews were all gone: “They were not missed, life continued, there was no effect for the economy.”

## **Tape 2**

More about the deportation.

About a fight between young boys, some Jewish. A non-Jewish boy shouts: Soon you will be exiled.

00:05 About liberation, April 13, 1945, a Gift of God. They are liberated by the Canadians. The policeman was celebrating as well.

00:08 His father had been taken on assignment from Germans, one had to make a living. There are not many people who did not do anything for the Germans in those years.

00:12 He witnessed the shooting of strikers in Hoogeveen.

00:14 End of interview