

KRAMER, Rense  
Netherlands Documentation Project  
Dutch  
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Rense Kramer was born in October 1927 in Foxhol which is part of the Hoogezand municipality. He comes from a Christian family and he describes the German occupation from this perspective in this interview. He describes how, after the Jewish men had been deported, the Jewish women and children who were left behind handled the situation. He also witnessed and recounts in details how these women and children were deported. He saw trains filled with Jews running alongside the village. Kramer also talks about the liberation, and indicates that many people, directly or indirectly, collaborated with the Germans.

File 1

**[01:] 00:30:19 – [01:] 09:37:15**  
**00:28 – 09:56**

Rense Kramer says he was born in October 1927 in Foxhol, in the municipality of Hoogezand; describes the area where he grew up and the role of the shipbuilding industry in this area; talks about the family he came from and reflects on his position as an only child; talks about his father's job as a self-employed painter; says the family, and particularly his father, were very involved within the Christian community of believers known as "Vergadering van gelovigen"; describes this community; talks about the anti-religious feelings in the village and within the shipbuilding community; describes the various Christian denominations in the area; discusses his father's negative feelings about politics and gives an example of this.

**[01:] 09:37:16 – [01:] 19:21:14**  
**09:57 – 20:05**

Kramer explains that he is half German; talks about the 1930s and about a German uncle who at first was quite taken with Hitler; describes how his uncle changed his mind after Kristallnacht; describes how his father spoke during gatherings about the return of Christ; describes how in 1939 a teacher spoke about the Germans in Poland; talks about the anti-German atmosphere that was dominant in the village; describes the invasion of the Germans on May 10, 1940; talks about Germans on bicycles; describes the confusion among the population and their reactions during those first days of war.

**[01:] 19:21:15 – [01:] 28:55:22**  
**20:06 – 30:03**

Rense Kramer talks about the faith people had that they would one day be liberated; talks about a number of Jewish families who kept to themselves; describes the low position these Jewish families had in society; talks about **Mr. De Lange**, a Jewish French teacher, who was no longer allowed to teach because he was Jewish; describes a conversation with the headmaster, **Mr. Bold**; describes how the Jews kept themselves at a distance within society;

indicates that he himself did not feel a bond with the Jews either; describes how he was given extra lessons by a Jewish family and how he had tried to teach this family about the Gospel.

**[01:] 28:55:23 – [01:] 38:29:02**  
**30:04 – 40:00**

Rense Kramer explains how his mother handled her German background; explains why no word of German was spoken at home; says he was regarded as an ethnic German, “Volksdeutscher”; describes the moment his father brought him his identity card, “Ausweis”, during a roundup; says the Germans raided their house; explains how Jewish families only just had time to prepare themselves; remembers well that men were deported; describes in detail the moment he heard a Jewish man speak badly of Hitler.

**[01:] 38:29:03 – [01:] 48:09:09**  
**40:01 – 50:04**

Rense Kramer describes how the women and children who were left behind dealt with the situation after the men were deported; says those who were left behind mentioned Poland and East Germany as destinations for the deportations; talks about the existence of the camp at Westerbork; talks about his father’s contact with a station master at Kropswolde; describes how he saw the water trains arriving from Groningen with Jews onboard; states that his wife saw Jews getting on the train in Groningen; describes how the train slowly passed by the Foxholdstermeer lake.

**[01:] 48:09:10 – [01:] 57:39:24**  
**50:05 – 59:59**

Rense Kramer describes what he saw when the train full of Jews passed by, and explains why he lay there in a boat in the reeds; states how frequently these transports of Jews passed; describes the role of the police and the national police during the deportations; describes how the last Jewish women and children were also deported; describes how as a policeman, his neighbour **Mellink** helped with the deportations; describes the impact of seeing mothers with children in the carriage that took them away.

**[01:] 57:39:25 – [02:] 05:21:02**  
**01:00:00 – 01:08:00**

Rense Kramer describes how even his father was unable to do anything and felt powerless; describes again in detail the roundup in Foxhol and the deportation of Jewish women and children there; talks extensively about the moment when a Jewish girl cried because she was separated from her doll during the roundup; describes how the houses of Jewish families were emptied by a **bode** [*translates as a Dutch word for messenger or emissary*] called **Oostland**, with a horse and carriage; indicates that not much was said about it; describes how everything just continued.

## File 2

[03:] 00:37:09 – [03:] 10:09:05

00:28 – 09:59

Rense Kramer talks about a fight that took place before the deportations between Dutch boys from the village and some Jewish friends; talks about the reaction to this at home; describes the journey taken by the trains coming from Groningen; describes the suspicions about the transports' final destination; describes how cruel the Germans could be; talks about the liberation by the Canadians on April 13, 1945 in Foxhol; talks about the role of the police and his neighbor during the war; indicates how people dealt with these things after the liberation; describes how his father and many other people worked for the German occupiers in one way or another.

[03:] 10:09:06 – [03:] 15:09:04

10:00 – 15:01

Rense Kramer talks more about the liberation and indicates that many people had worked together with the German occupiers, directly or indirectly; tells a story about men who deliberately sabotaged the German shipbuilding yard while working for the Germans and who were then executed; says he saw one shooting in Hoogezand of men who had been on strike at the shipbuilding wharf where a man called **Gerrit Imbos** was shot.