

**\*RG-50.570\*28**                      **Interview not yet at USHMM (12/5/06)**  
**Interviewee**                      **Mr. Roelof Arnoldi**  
**Interviewer**                      **Martijn van Haalen**  
**Cameraman**                      **Paul Enkelaar**  
**Date**                              **13 July 2005**  
**Place**                              **Purmerend**  
**Interview Number**              **28**

*Mr Arnoldi was a young boy, living in Assen. Assen is in the north-east of The Netherlands, not far from Westerbork. He witnessed the arrest of the Jews in his street. One of them was his neighbor. In his street lived a man who made coffins. Mr. Arnoldi went with him to Westerbork to bring coffins to the camp.*

**Tape 1 of 1**

0        Born in Assen June 1 1929. I lived there until 1952. There were a lot of Dutch Nazi's in this area. There was a lot of poverty and the farmers hoped that the NSB could change there economic situation.  
I had one brother and two sisters.

In May 1940 all bridges were demolished by the Dutch to stop the Germans. I remember Germans walking through the streets; that is all I remember of the first war days.

5        My father was in military service. He was stationed on the island Terschelling and sent to Alkmaar. We did not here from him until July.  
Father was warrant officer..  
My mother was red, a socialist. My father did not dare to be red because he was working for the army.

There were a lot of soldiers in Assen it is a garrison city.

In May 1941 the first laws against Jews were implemented. In Assen lived 550 Jews, only 23 returned after WWII. It is a city of 20.000 inhabitants.

We were befriended with our neighbors, the family Nieweg. They were Jewish. Now my father forbade us to have contact with them. We used to visit each other regularly. My mother would go there every Friday to put off the lights. But my father said: "Jewfriends will be treated badly". Mrs Nieweg understood the situation. On my birthday on June 1 she gave me a tennis racket. Because we could not visit each other she gave it over the hedge.

Break

10       Mrs Nieweg tried to keep in contact with us over the hedge.  
My father was a very scared man.

On October 2<sup>nd</sup> the Jews had to go to the Public School

Break

- 15 I remember the date, because we had that day off from school. All Jews had to go to the school.  
A day earlier I had received punishment and was sent upstairs. I was looking out of the window and I saw a raid-van that stopped in front of the house of the family Nieweg. They came at the door.  
I also saw Miss Davidson and a couple of Jewish children and Mrs Nieweg and they were all taken away. Mrs. Nieweg was taken but she was not wearing her wig, she wanted to return to the house to get her wig, but they would not let her.
- I ask my parents if I could go to the Public School to bring the wig, but my parents would not let me. I was never allowed to do anything.
- They were not allowed to take anything with them, so that whole story about 'working' was nonsense.
- After that day, there were a lot of empty seats in my school. Before I had not known who was Jewish and who was Christian.
- 20 More about the arrest:  
There were two vans. There were Germans and one Dutch Nazi with NSB-uniform.  
Next door to Nieweg lived another family, by the name was Nijstad, they were also taken away. A couple with a daughter.
- In the street also lived Willem Hofstee. He made coffins. I went with him once to Westerbork to bring coffins.
- Nobody talked about the people that had been taken away.
- 25 In Assen there were no hiding places.
- Later we knew about the trains that went from Westerbork to Germany.
- Willem Hofstee would take the coffins to Westerbork by car. There were only about eight cars in Assen, so that was something, to drive in a car. Westerbork was very near to Assen. Westerbork looked very orderly. Rows of barracks.
- 30 There was only contact with some people who were in charge. The camp eldest. I went there four or five times. Hofstee would smuggle notes and letters out of the camp.
- I collected notes near the railways. Willem Hofstee gave me stamps to send the messages. I did that three times, looking for notes. Later I did not dare to do it anymore.
- 35 I never saw any of the Jews again. Not even one of the children from my school. Nobody I knew returned after liberation.
- 40 Fam. Nijstad had built the house themselves in 1938. Now Dutch Nazi's moved in. All the furniture stayed. This was a reward because their son was a volunteer at

the East front and he had done a very good job.

After liberation they had to leave the house and a widow of a resistance fighter got the house for her and her children.

45 I saw that the furniture of the Nieweg family was taken away with by a moving company.

Later I had many nightmares about Mrs Nieweg. She would be standing at my bed with my tennis racket.