

CLARA DIJKSTRA
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Clara was a married Christian woman living in Amsterdam during the war who safely hid a Jewish child, Nettie Wolf for 3 1/2 years until the end of the war. Nettie was 2 years old when a woman that Clara didn't know asked her to take her child. The woman and her husband were going into hiding and couldn't take the child Clara was living in an area that had many Jewish people and she acidly worked for the Resistance transporting Jewish children by bicycle to safe houses.

She denied that Nettie was Jewish, but thinks many of her neighbors knew but didn't tell since they knew she came to the neighborhood with only her husband and then had a two-year-old. Clara said there were several close calls with the Nazis. Once the SS came into the bedroom, but because of the light, Nettie looked like she had blonde hair instead of dark, and the SS went away. Clara was aware that people caught hiding Jews were shot in public and then the hidden Jews sent to concentration camps.

Clara takes about the difficulties of finding enough food, since there was no ID for Nettie. Sometimes the bakery down the street gave them free bread. In the "hunger winter" of 1944-45 many children and adults died from starvation, especially in the north of the country. Clara bartered possessions for food and also went to farms in search of food. Sometimes they received bread through the Red Cross in Sweden parachuting the loaves down into Holland.

After liberation it took a while for Nettie's parents to come to claim her. Then they wanted to take the child immediately, but Nettie was distraught and, after 31/2 years, believed that Clara was her mother. Clara asked the parents to take it slow, but the mother took Nettie within the week. Nettie had some difficulties later on in school due to psychological issues probably due to this experience. She still calls Clara "Momma Clara" and her real mother "Mamma Selma". When Nettie, who moved to Israel, had her first child, she showed the baby to Clara before her own parents. Clara states there has always been a rivalry between Nettie's birth mother and herself.

Clara states that she bases her ability to help on her spontaneity and her love of children. Her mother knew what she was doing and was afraid for her, but did support her. Years ago, Clara's story was on TV and her parents saw it. She believes that she became known to Yad Vashem through Nettie, and she was surprised to get a medal from them. Nettie was married in Israel in 1968; she has several children and her oldest studied painting in Amsterdam. Clara has visited Nettie many times in Israel

Clara had five children. She eventually divorced her husband who was drinking heavily. She is still close to Nettie.