

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Karel Poons
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Karel Poons, conducted by Adina Conn on October 12, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held jointly by Adina Conn and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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KAREL POONS

October 12, 1990

Q: Please tell us your full name.

A: Full name? Karel Poons.

Q: Where and when were you born?

A: In Amsterdam, 14th of August, nineteen hundred and twelve.

Q: Can you tell me about your childhood, about your parents?

A: Well, we were...there was five children. And I was the youngest one, so I was spoiled from the beginning. And it was a very nice, nice family. It was old-fashioned, but not too much old-fashioned.... My mother died when I was sixteen. Then we spread, and I went with my eldest sister. And I went uh to school again, because I didn't know what to become...I didn't...I didn't want to do anything. There was nothing I liked to do, you know? And, uh, so I first had a...I worked with the um...uh, American company there, telegraph company, and I learned to type blind; and at that time uh there was a girl, and she said to me, "You must come to...I, I'm dance...I do a little bit dancing, and we have a performance in in the theater in Amsterdam. You must come and have a look." And then I did that. And I knew from that moment what I wanted to become, because it was very advanced ...uh modern dance, at that time. It was in '30. I was about eighteen, I think. And there were a lot of men--about twenty men, I thought--in that choir, you know; but, uh, dance...dance. And it was very interesting. A woman who...I, I went there the next day, and I got my class...amateur classes because I was still at, uh, Cath...uh, Catholic school. Because my father was bookbinder, had an office in _____house (ph). My brother was printer; and so I thought, "Well," And then I got an, after three years I got a marvelous job. And then in between I learned what dancing was, a little bit; and a woman, [Florrie Hodlechko (ph)], she asked me to become professional. And I said to her "I, I have no money for that." "Well," she said, "I do it for nothing." And so I started. I started the same day, perhaps a name will say something in America. [Lucas Offing (ph)], a very famous dancer in America, and in Holland too; he was...we started the same day dancing with this woman.

Q: Can you back up a minute? Can you tell me the names of your siblings?

A: My what?

Q: Your brothers and sisters.

A: My eldest sister was uh called Sarah, and she was married to a nephew. And my second sister, Mariam, was also married, with one child. And the third one was Elise, Elizabeth. And I had one brother, Leo.

Q: Do you have any particular memories of your childhood?

A: Um...well, in in what way? I was very fond of my youngest sister, who died very young. And my brother, I had...I had no contact with him. He was six years older than I was, and never came to see us as a brothers. So, I... After the war, one sister uh survived--my second sister--and then then we became good friends.

Q: What about your friends when you were growing up?

A: Huh?

Q: Your friends...do you remember any certain relationships?

A: Oh yes, of course...I have uh friends. I had a lot of friends then already, and uh...gosh...at my school I had two friends and one had two sisters. They all went to Palestine... Palestinia. And another friend I remember very well, because he (laughing) phoned me yesterday. After that I didn't see him for forty years, he phoned me--because of, uh, of TV. I was in it last Tuesday, and he saw my name and he phoned me.

Q: What did you do when you were younger? What kinds of games did you play, or activities did you participate in?

A: I have not the slightest idea. When I was about, uh...I think, thirteen or fourteen, I went into, um, theo...how do you pronounce that? Theo...theosophist, theosophic society...youth.

Q: Philosophic?

A: Not philosophic. Theosophic. That's...you cannot help. I can't...a certain kind of uh...yah, it is very difficult to say it...a kind of certain way of life. And there were all kinds of _____...lots of ceremonies which I liked very much. My family didn't like it so much, but you were[n't] afraid to do what you wanted.

Q: Can you describe the kinds of ceremonies?

A: Oh, yes. It was called, uh, "Tafel...", "Table Round." You know, King Arthur and Table Round. So there were twelve youngsters and one, uh, woman who was the leader of this. And we had to say all kinds of things, and we talked and we talked and we talked. I had a lot of, uh, good memories of that time.

Q: Can you tell me more about it? Were you a certain character? Was there something in particular that you talked about?

A: No, no...about everything in the world, you know? Certainly about being, uh, un...un,

uh...unprejudiced, things like that. Uh, _____ from a difficult life, and to be good man.

Q: Did you portray any of the characters at the time? Did your friends, any of the Arthurian characters that you just described?

A: I don't understand you.

Q: When you were talking about King Arthur and the Round Table, did each one of you play one of the characters?

A: Oh no, no, no, no. We were just dressed in long robes, our...all the same.

Q: And where would this take place?

A: In Amsterdam, in a big house. This woman was the wife of a doctor. She had a big house in the eastern...east of the city.

Q: What was the Jewish community like when you were growing up?

A: Ach...well, there was a large, large community, of course. But my parents were, uh, very liberal; and, uh, so I didn't learn anything about the Jewish, uh, things. Only when I became bar mitzvah. I had a uncle who was hazzan, and so he learned me to sing songs. These two, two words says twenty words; because it was a great uh thing to be bar mitzvah, you know, and lots of people.... And then after my mother, when my mother died in...my mother died when I was sixteen...'28, I went for a year, everyday, to...to synagogue to say Kaddish. And then after that year, I was totally uh out of of...of belief; and I still am. I'm sorry to say to so, but....

Q: Was there any antisemitism in Amsterdam that you noticed before?

A: No. I, I don't really know. I don't...have never met it. It should have been there, but I don't...we lived in a quarter where there were many many people, and we were...well-to-do people, and there was nothing in particular difficult. Because then I was at a school where I...twenty-eight pupils, there were at least twenty Jews. But my mother had a special, uh, relig...religion for herself, so she thought it was unthinkable that God would not uh...would uh be so that you had not to learn on Saturday. So we went to school on Saturday. That was her, her idea.

Q: What kind of school did you go to on Saturday?

A: Oh, just a...just a school. Not special.

Q: Dutch, uh, public school, or....?

A: Public school, yes.

Q: And when you joined the company...you were 18 when you joined the company?

A: No, I didn't join the company. I, I just took classes. Of course, you can't immediately in the company. And, uh, and then I uh went with this woman and a few dancers to Brussels. Because she was very ambitious, and she had made a ballet about something that happened in Holland where the government threw bombs on their own war...warship because of some mutiny; and she made a ballet about that. And after that all theaters were forbidden for her. So we left Amsterdam for Brussels.

Q: What year was that?

A: I don't remember. I think it was about...I think it must have been about in the '30's...'35 or something like that... '34 or '35.

Q: Can you describe for me what the climate in Amsterdam was like, for you, just prior to the invasion of the Netherlands?

A: Oh, just marvelous. I liked it very much. I still like it. Again, it was marvelous. It was very free city, and uh I had no troubles at all, mixed...and mixed friends...not Jews, not only Jews; and we had all kind of friends.

Q: And what happened to you and your family in 1940 when the country was invaded?

A: In the first year nothing happened. Nothing happened. My mother had died already, and...well, life went on. They were very smart, the Germans. Everybody thought, "Well, this is it." And I could...I was then at another company, another ballet company. And uh in the first year nothing happened. And the second year the trouble started. Of course, the Jews were thrown out, out of the company.

Q: Which company was this?

A: The company was called "Yvonne George." Yvonne George was the dancer and choreographer, and she made this company.

Q: And how did the anti-Jewish laws begin to affect you?

A: Well, the moment that they had to move to uh, to the Jewish quarter, that I knew immediately that I would go underground--or how do you call it?--and, uh, I had a very nice house, small house, in the Jewish quarter. It was a small uh flat. And we had about 45 performances in the Jewish uh theater, only Jews; and they were marvelous performances...opera and operetta and uh...you know. And then suddenly I got notice where I could hide. It was quite near Amsterdam.

Q: So you were dancing professionally at the time?

A: Yes. Yes, sure. Yes.

Q: And did you or any of your family members try to leave Europe at the time?

A: Hmm?

Q: Did you or any of your family members try to leave Europe?

A: I don't think so. No. No. No. I, the other family... the other family, I don't know. I, I had little contact with uncles and aunts and things like that, and I don't know anybody who left Holland.

Q: Can you tell me more about the ballets you were dancing at the time of the invasion and before you had to go into hiding?

A: What kind of ballets? Well, all kind of ballets... Dutch, Dutch choreographers...this German woman, Yvonne George, made marvelous ballets. They were uh little abstract ballets, and there were story ballets, and uh she did.... For example, the first thing I did was a Coppelia; one of the...one of the boys, of course. And it was a very pleasant company, not too big; and so I danced there until '42. And then I went to the hiding address, and it was a marvelous address in, in, near Amsterdam.

Q: Before you went into hiding, can you tell me what the Germans, the Nazis, did to the townspeople in Amsterdam and what the people's response was?

A: I must say you notice...I notice...noticed nothing. I am a very strange character. I didn't want to hear about it. I knew I would hide, and I didn't see my family anymore because they were already in hiding places and uh.... Of course, you didn't know where...nobody knew anything about anybody. And uh I got uh...because I...at that time I was very blond, and blue-eyes; and so for Germans, it was unthinkable that I was Jewish. So I was very free to walk around and to do everything I wanted to do.

Q: When did your family go into hiding?

A: I don't know. I don't know, because my eldest sister and brother [**NB:** -in-law], I heard afterwards went I think a little...right after I went; but I didn't see them anymore. And, uh, they went in hiding in a place near, quite near Amsterdam. And there was a minister, you know...a ___ minister, from what I heard afterwards from my other brother-in-law. And he said to my brother-in-law, "Do you have a lot of money with you?" And he had. "And don't you think it's better that you give it to me?" And he said, "Well, yes." And then the next day he was thrown out...of the house, of the hiding place. And then my sister was a very nervous

person. She wanted to go back to her own house, which was already more or less raided by the neighbors. But she got things back, and they waited until the Germans came to fetch them.

Q: And you don't recall what year this was?

A: Hmm?

Q: Do you recall what year this was?

A: No, no. I think '43, '42...I don't know.

Q: So what happened to you when you went into hiding?

A: I had a strange, but it was...I had a marvelous time. It was a marvelous house, and there was a woman there that... I had a big studio where I could train every day, and so I even had the vitality to give performance there. So the performance was a (laughter)...I had a little gramophone which I had still at that time to turn 'round. It was very nice.

Q: Were you hiding in Amsterdam?

A: No, no. In [Hausen (ph)], in the quarry pits. About a half an hour from Amsterdam. In the country.

Q: How did you get there? How were the arrangements made?

A: I went on the train, just. And I went there [with] an address, or something like that; and I came there and told who I were. I had another name at the time already.

Q: Why did you decide to leave the company?

A: I had to.

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

Q: You were describing your safe house and the performances.

A: Yes. Well, that was very nice and uh, and the most important thing for me was then that I could train every day; even with winter, with woolen things and cotton gloves on my hand. But it was very nice and this woman tried to do with me. It was a very good understanding between us. I stayed there for three years.

Q: Who did you perform for?

A: For a few friends of this woman...she was also (laughter) of the society, grown up, the theosophic society. That is in this little town, it was the center there; and so she had a lot of good friends, but they didn't know that I was uh hidden. They thought I was bombed out of The Hague. That was our story. She had family in The Hague; and so she made the nephew who was bombed out, and I took her name and I got the right, uh, papers.

Q: And she wasn't Jewish?

A: No. No.

Q: What news did you have of the outside world during this time?

A: A lot of news. First of all, we had a radio; and there were papers, underground papers, and we got somehow. And you read a lot.

Q: How were you able to keep a radio?

A: Well, it was hidden somewhere in the house, and uh we were very lucky that when there was, the Nazi are in the house that they didn't find it; and they didn't find me either.

Q: And what was an average day like for you during that period?

A: Oh well, at first it was all the training. And then I started...she was a weaver, and so she had wool; and I started to uh make wool, you know? And we read a lot, and we walked a lot; and uh we had a very ordinary life and the shopping in the nearest town. And uh, and in...when I was shopping there in Hilversum, suddenly I saw my brother--who was in uh, in Holland ...in the concentration camp in Holland--and uh went (pause)... and I went up to him and I said, "Mr. Poons, how are you?" He said, "I don't know you." I said, "Yes, but I am your brother." And then we talked for ten minutes; and I asked, "Why don't you uh, go hiding?" He said, "I can't. They don't do anything to me. I have in uh..." Westerbork, is it?... "my wife and children are there, so I can't stay away. And I have all the supervision of everything

that's printed, so they will not do nothing to me."

Q: How was it he got out of the camp?

A: He just was permitted to, to, to do the purchases for the for the printery. But he was also killed, was in a concentration camp afterwards.

Q: Was he supervised when he left Westerbork?

A: No, I don't think so; because they were sure he would come back. He was quite alone there, because of his wife and his work, what he did there.

Q: Why didn't he recognize you?

A: Because I was blond. I wasn't blond before the war; and during the war there was a lot of peroxide (laughter) and....

Q: And you dyed your hair?

A: Yes. Yes.

Q: When you were hiding, did you have false ID papers?

A: Yes. First very uh...the first time they were very bad papers of an acquaintance, of the pianist of the company. And then I suddenly was in a shop, and the owner of the shop said to me...it was an empty shop..."Do you need good papers?" And I was a little bit, uh, taken back, and said, "Well, I don't know." And I asked this woman where I lived...she said, "Oh, yes. It's alright." And the next day I went and said, "Well, this offer you made me yesterday, it's alright. Now somebody will come to you." And comes someone.... We became very, very good friends afterwards, because he was a...he spoke fluently Dutch. I thought he came from the eastern part of the country. But it was a German Communist, married with a Jewish woman...one child; and they had a house quite near us where about thirty people were hidden. All her family were there. And it was very strange, because uh he said to me, "Do you have any work?" I said, "Oh, there is nothing to draw." I was drawing. It was in my papers that it was...how do you call it? Graphics. He said, "No, I don't mean that. I mean, of course, are you still doing something in dance?" I said, "How do you know that you're...that I'm a dancer?" And he said, "My wife is a dancer, too; and she saw you many times in, here in [Hausen (ph)] walking." And then afterwards I met her; and we took the vitality to, to rent a studio in a nearby city, near my village, and we went to train there for a while. And then they were uh, um...they were all taken away by Germans, of course. It was somewhat

_____.

Q: Who was that?

A: Who did that?

Q: Who...who was taken away?

A: The whole family. All of them.

Q: The family that you...you were living with in that town?

A: No. Well, I was dancing only with this one woman. And I never saw the other ones who lived in that house. I never came to that house, only a few moments. And I had the luck there that this woman had said to me, "If there is something wrong with your bike, or something else, we always know people who can make it all right." And so one day we had given...on a Friday night, we took our bikes there and we could get them on Monday; and we had given them books to read and they had given us books to read. We were on the...on the verge of uh going there to fetch books and the bikes; and we were outside and I said to the woman...I wasn't living..."Let us wait for the postman." He was in the house nearby. And the postman said, "Well, you have heard about it?" That the Germans are at this moment in the house where they are. So then I went...we went back. And I had to leave this house, of course, because...because it was too dangerous. Perhaps they found out letters or.... And so I...I didn't know what to do. And I had met just, before I went away from Amsterdam...I uh had a lunch with friends--an actor and and friend of his who was student in [Maarthen (ph)]--and they was having lunch with me, in the Jewish part of the town, of course. And then we were having luncheon; and I don't know why but I had all the family silver... the forks and spoons and..., and then soon there was a ring at the door. You can't imagine it now. And there were two very uh, well, violent persons and they came to fetch the silver...

Q: _____?

A: Yeah...Anaz...Nazis, of course. And they were very polite. And I said, "Well, they are all on the table. Take it away."

Q: How did they know it was there?

A: Yes.

Q: How did they know it was there?

A: I couldn't tell you. They just tried, perhaps; or they knew from someone. And then this student boy, this...certainly he was--his wife was his screen...he said to me when they left, "If ever you are in trouble, you can...here is my phone number in [Maarthen (ph)], where I live." And at that time...I mean.... '44, '43...I phone him. And he said, "Well, come to me." And I stayed with him for a fortnight, and everything was clear again; and afterwards he came to us, when they started to go after the students.

Q: And what was it like when you stayed with him for a fortnight?

A: Well, excellent. We had a nice time together.

Q: The entire time that you were in hiding, you had false identification papers. Did you have to hide? You mentioned that you go out for walks _____ with the other _____? Were you able to be seen in public?

A: Oh, yes. I went everywhere. I went even to a performance in a nearby city of the company where I was in; and it was a little bit stupid, but nothing happened. And uh I went shopping. And nobody paid any attention to me, ever. And only when there was a razzia in this...in the village, in the street where I lived, and I was uh.... Well, we lived in a nice house, a nice villa; and uh next to us there were two...a German brother and sister lived there. But they were already for thirty or forty years in Holland, and never spoke German. And in the morning, at seven o'clock in the morning, suddenly I heard that they were speaking German; and I said to the woman...I said, "Please go and have a look." And she went out to have a look, and she...she said to me...she made a sign; and we had a marvelous hiding place in the house. And I went there in two minutes. And then they came in.

Q: Who came in?

A: The Germans.

Q: Where were you hiding in the house at the time?

A: Under the floor.

Q: What happened when the Germans came in?

A: Well, they were...looked everywhere but they didn't find me and they didn't find anything. They didn't...by, by sheer luck, they didn't find even my uh, my uh clothes. They were hidden every night away in a.... And then I heard them come in to the uh bathroom, but it was so nice and so well done that they couldn't imagine that there was an entrance to the, uh under the floor; so I laid there down. It was all over with, with blankets and everything. And after a while I heard this woman laughing with them outside because she was glad that they were outside... out of the house.

Q: Was that where you would have to stay most of the time, under the floor?

A: Never...no, no. I had only been for for two hours... never again. I never...I never hid. I think the best thing was not to hide.

Q: And at this time did you hear anything from your family?

- A: No, no. Yes. My sister, my second sister, was uh hidden in the north of the country. And they escaped from the Germans, also by a good hiding place; and my sister and her daughter came to us, and this woman where I lived found them a place nearby, and afterwards another place [in another part of the (ph)] country.
- Q: What happened to you after this place, after you stayed there?
- A: I went to Amsterdam, looking if I could find somebody.
- Q: And this was when?
- A: I must...the war finished...5th of May...6th...7 May. I went walking to Amsterdam, and I had a good friend there who would...who made it possible for me to hide because he was solicitor. And he told me afterwards he had a lot of uh Fascist clients, and all the money he got from them he gave me; because I had to live and I had no money.
- Q: What did you do after the war, if we can backtrack to...?
- A: No. That was during the war.
- Q: It was during the war. What year was this?
- A: Huh?
- Q: What year was that?
- A: Well, from the beginning that I was hidden, he took care of me.
- Q: But you hid for how many years?
- A: Three years. Exactly three years. July 28th, 1942 until May '45.
- Q: When you were dancing in the city, were you involved in any efforts with helping with the underground at all?
- A: No. We didn't know anything about it. We just travel in the beginning of the war. You didn't know where to go where to go. You didn't know what to do. You were with friends who were...well, didn't let you go. And they...they managed to get money from all kind of people...from....
- Q: And so you stayed in hiding the entire time? Were you ever transported?
- A: Hmm?

Q: Were you ever transported?

A: No. Nothing happened. I told you, nothing happened to me. I lived a very comfortable life there for three years. A big garden. And next time you come to Holland, I'll show you pictures of the time, dancing in the garden.

Q: What do you remember about liberation?

A: Well, the first thing of course we knew it and we heard it. Everybody shouted; and celebrating immediately. And then I went to Amsterdam after a few days.

Q: Who liberated you?

A: Who liberated us there? (Pause) I don't know. (Laughing) I don't remember. I think Polish people...and, uh, English people...Canadians. No...Canadians. Yes, right. Canadians.

Q: And that was in the town where you were in hiding, they came?

A: No. I was immediately away there. I went to Amsterdam, because I lived there.

Q: Do you remember liberation day?

A: No, because at liberation day I was still in this place; so there was not much work.... Well, there was a little bit of feasting, but there were no...no uh _____ people at that time. So it was just everybody was uh...the flag outside the house in the front, and the Queen's uh portrait everywhere, you know.

Q: How did you learn of liberation, then?

A: Well, they shouting...there were people who shouted, and phoned us. There was still phone.

Q: And what happened to you after liberation?

A: Well, at first I...I went to this friend of mine; and we, we, we, I found very quickly my sister and uh her daughter back in Amsterdam. And my brother-in-law. And then there came...uh, there was a Polish woman, a dancer; and she started a small group. And I heard, and I was engaged for two weeks. But because I got terrible [allergies always (ph)], during the rehearsal I left the company again. And then we went with this first woman I had class with, and who made this [fantasist (ph)] ballet. She made the ballet about the uh setting, about the time during the war; and with that company, we went to Copenhagen for the Concours. And when we came back--there was only half an hour--and um when we came to uh, back to Amsterdam, we thought it was a pity because there wasn't _____ ballet. And then we made with a few other people a new company....

Q: When you say "we," who are you referring to?

A: That was Mascha TerWeeme, and [Florrie Hodlechko (ph)], and the dancers of the time; _____ and [De Donke (ph)].

Q: When did you meet Mascha TerWeeme?

A: Huh?

Q: When did you meet Mascha TerWeeme?

A: Well, I knew her before the war. She was in the same company with Yvonne George. She was the first dancer at the time. And now, I don't know...and she lived in Amsterdam, so I went up to her...it's very easy. She lived at the same address, so there was no difficulty at all.

Q: Was the ballet involved at all in helping the resistance efforts?

A: I can't...I don't know. Of, of course I don't know, because I wasn't there.

Q: And when you were, after you just described...how was your life after liberation?

A: Excellent. A marvelous time. I liked dancing. I liked uh...I did teaching; I liked teaching, and uh that's what I said ...you had, you had to have luck. A friend of mine said the other day to me--the man, that friend whom you met yesterday--he said, "The only thing you had to have is mazel." And it's true. It's true.

Q: So what company did you dance with then, after the war?

A: After I was danced with this Ballet de Laaglanden, the Lowlands Ballet, Ballet of the Lowlands. And in in '50..'54, I suddenly stopped dancing. I was only 41 or so. I was not old. And I started a studio for myself, already; and then afterwards, I had to do with the company of young Skapino Ballet. And I gave them training, and I made a lot of ballets for them. And so I stopped with everything when...when I became director of the Academy of Dancing...

Q: Which one?

A: Skapino Dance Academy. And that was a part of the theater school afterwards. I started in '55 for myself; and then I got acquainted with Skapino, _____, the director, and so it grew and grew. And there again I had a lot of luck.

Q: Can you tell me about your life from that point to the present?

A: My private life?

Q: _____ you just described to us what, what's happened currently?

A: Well, you know I met my friend in '51, and we had a very happy life. (Pause--weeping) It's your fault, you asked me. Now and then, I went on giving classes and being Director of this school, this academy. And I've really had a very nice life.

Q: Can you tell me about some of the things you've choreographed?

A: Hmm?

Q: Can you tell me about some of the things you've choreographed, about your students?

A: Well, I choreographed for the company always, uh...well, abstract ballets, and, and story ballets. And, uh, for my students, I made everything because, uh, I had to do with the smaller ones and it had grown up. And I did all kinds of things; even when I was 64, I did in the ballet *Coppelia*, the old man... because one of the pupils fell ill a week before the performance, so I had to take the part. It was very nice.

Q: Are there certain individuals you've enjoyed dancing with the most?

A: Hmm?

Q: Are there certain individuals you've enjoyed dancing with the most?

A: Well, in a big company and I dance with a colleague a lot of duets. It's a [pas de donke (ph)], and we made them ourselves. And when you're in a company you have to dance with everybody, you know. That's just the fun of it.

Q: Have there been any other...have there been exceptional students _____?

A: Pupils of mine? Yes, a few. Yes, certainly there have. A few with the National Ballet now, and a few of the boys will become one of the...they became good choreographers. The younger ones at the moment are nearly all ex-pupils of mine, that they're all 30 or 40 _____.

Q: May I ask...when did you find out what had happened to your family?

A: Shortly after the war, of course, when they brought all these lists and.... But my father came back from Theresienstadt, and my second sister came back. And then, as I say I, I don't know where they died. I don't know; because the family should know, but I didn't want to hear about it.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add?

A: Huh?

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A: Ah, no. Many things happened during the war. I always felt...sometimes very interesting, but well...you have...you certainly will have much more stories told than I can tell you. When these people what I told you about in in Hausen (ph) were all taken away. They all were taken away; and afterwards, a few months afterwards, we got the message that uh there were papers in the house left from the underground. And they had, um, one daughter; and it was...when these people would have, had been married really--the German Communist with the Jewish woman--then the child was not Jewish, and uh...at the moment. Then they took...they didn't take the girl away [**NB:** the Germans regarded her as non-Jewish, and therefore did not take her]. She was hidden in the house by the doctor, I think. And then a few days later, we heard that...well, we had to find out that these people were not married at all. So the underground knew that this child was...should be taken next day. So we were with a few people, and we took this child away from this house in...early in the morning. She lives now in East Germany, and uh I often see her. She's now a grandmother already.

Q: You and who else took the child?

A: Now, I didn't took the child. Marion [von] Binsbergen, Marion Pritchard [**NB:** the reference is to the same individual, under first her maiden and then her married names]...she was leading. And the parents of this child always tell them everywhere that I did it, and I gave up to contradict them. Even the books they have written this, and Marian has it now. As if I, I uh rescued the child; and it was not me. It was Marion who did it. Because there wasn't...they have told she had spoken with this doctor, and he should be away early in the morning and his wife should open the door. And when we came she didn't dare. She didn't open the door, and uh Marian took in hand and took the child away. She hit this woman. She knocked her down, and took the child away.

Q: She essentially kidnapped her?

A: Yes, quite true. Yes, fortunately. Otherwise she would have gone to concentration camps.

Q: Were you with Marian? You were with Marian at the time?

A: Well, we saw each other.

Q: Well, in this particular instance?

A: Yes, yes, yes. But it was just an incident. And uh when we took, afterwards we tried to find these papers in the house. And that's like a a story in a play, you know? Because I told you I did a lot of uh movement exercises and then I had to...I had one...woman [where] I was hidden...she climbed up the house and uh threw something through the window. And she

throw everything out in our house what she could find, also the papers that they are looking for. And I stood outside...it was outside the, the village; and I was looking around and I was laughing a little bit...that I don't what I should do if somebody came. I didn't know what to do, and nothing happened.

Q: You knew the person who was throwing them out? I'm a little confused. Who was throwing them out?

A: The the woman who, um...where I was hidden. She was also underground...engaged with people. And it was like a comic scene. It was...it was in the middle of the night, and we were not allowed to be on the street; and we took the mattresses and everything out of the house. It was ridiculous.

Q: Are there other such stories that you can recall?

A: Uh hmm...

Q: Do you have other such stories that you can recall?

A: No. I don't think so, but I...no. I only recall that uh uh...I told you my sister was...came to us, and afterwards she went to uh a peasant family. But she couldn't travel with her bags. And so we said, "Well, we come...we come after you, afterwards, a few days later with all your luggage." And this woman where I was hidden, she--uh, Mrs. [Hanneloos (ph)]--she, uh, was weaver and so she had to buy wool. So we went there, and we said, "Well, of course, we are here to find wool." I, I don't think there was one sheep, but that didn't matter. And when we came after a long trip to this village, there came then policeman and said, "What are you uh...what are you doing here?" So we said, "Well, we are looking for, uh, wool." He said, "Well, I don't think so that it's true. I think you are going to Mrs. De Vrieses (ph),"--my sister--"who is hidden away with Frau Haut (ph)." And it was true. But we said, "No, we don't know anything about that. We were just looking for wool." And I show him..."Show your passports," and I gave to him. It was good and he gave it back. And my, uh, guest, uh, woman, how you say? She gave hers, and he said to her, "Well, this is false." And I said to this man, "Well, how can you say that? Of course, it is not false!Otherwise we would be much more nervous." And he said to me, "Well, you needn't be nervous. I can see that. But this woman is totally..." Uh...uh...how do you call that? "Bleak... have lost all color, you know." And then he said, "Well, it's alright. Go to this house; because you needn't be afraid. I made the hiding places for Mrs. [De Vries (ph)]." And when we came there, they laughed a little bit. But again, the luck.... This man was after the war, had been I think ten or twenty years in prison because he had given people to the Nazis; and by chance not my sister and not us. Luck...mazel.

Q: Anything else that you'd like to add or _____?

A: No, no, I don't...it was not a very interesting time. It was a nice time, and we followed

everything and we thought what we should do after the war. And I wanted to dance again. And that happened.

Q: Was it hard putting your life back together again after the war?

A: No, no. No, not at all. No. I got a room...I got an engagement since I couldn't...I don't...I don't remember. I'm not so very much interested in money, so I really don't remember where that money came from after the war; but somebody have given it to me for a while and then we...I got an engagement in _____.

Q: Anything else you'd like to add?

A: No. It's enough.

Q: Thank you very much.

A: You are welcome.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

END OF INTERVIEW