



HIDDEN YOUTH WW2

IMAGES OF MY FIRST MEMORIES

My name is Uri Speelman, born Philip Speelman, nickname in Holland Flip but today in Israel Uri

Based on Dutch genealogy of my family tree, it goes back to the 18th century. During the

German occupation documentary has been destroyed.

MEMORIES

Memories I have from early stages are vague besides the fact my dad rented a bike and taught me how to ride, which I still do until today.

BEGINNING OF THE SANCTIONS

On May 10, 1940 Nazi Germany declared the war and attacked Holland. The main purpose of the Germans was to "clean" the country of Jewish citizens. This forced my parents to forge their papers, dye their hair to red to avoid "jewish appearance" and to go into hiding, whilst they decided to send me to a city called Apeldoorn which is located approximately 100km south of Amsterdam. I stayed there with a family of which the wife was a teacher. Before my arrival there, I went to nursery school, which had a Montessori education system, which enabled me to learn some reading and writing. This helped me in a later stage in life. The foster mother taught me more.

PARENT'S NOSTALGY

But after a short while, my parents were longing to see me and decided to transfer me to a family in Amsterdam, located not far from their hiding place.

AGAIN ON THE RUN

Again after less than a year, I was told, I could not stay any longer with that family and I was sent to a lawyer in a city called Deventer, but after less than a week the lawyer discovered, his neighbour was a collaborator with the Nazis, which jeopardized his and my life, so I was sent on by the Dutch Underground Movement to a village called Holwerd in the province of Friesland, which is in the northern part of the country. I had a warm receipt by my new foster parents and my sudden 8 brothers and sisters. I stayed there for about 2.5 years, went to Protestant church every Sunday and was properly fed, whilst in the big cities people suffered from hunger.

SCHOOL

Although I arrived there at the age of 6, the headmaster of the public school refused to accept a Jewish child and therefore I remained in kindergarten until the age of 8. I was champion in all children's craftworks. Suddenly in 1944, I was accepted in the first grade, but after 6 weeks I was promoted to the second grade, thanks to the fact, I learned some reading and writing in nursery school.

-2-

DESTINATION OF MY PARENTS AND THE DUTCH JEWRY

My parents, who went into hiding in Amsterdam forged their ID papers, dyed their hair from dark to red, but unfortunately they were betrayed by the family they were hidden with and sold by them to the Germans. The price of a "Jewish head" was Fl.7.50. Out of 17,000 Jews, who lived in my area, only 4,000 survived. Out of the 140,000 Jews, who lived in Holland before the war, only 30,000 survived and this mainly due to the collaboration of the Dutch population with the Germans in spite of the many brave Dutch citizens, who saved Jews from being perished, endangering their own life, as hiding Jews was strictly forbidden.

LIBERATION

In April 1945, Canadian tanks entered Holwerd. I remember out of emotion no one was capable to eat, so practically, I ate the breakfast of the whole family.

CONCENTRATION CAMP OR "TO HELL AND BACK"

My parents were deported to Westerbork in 1943 and from there sent on to Poland. My father according to Red Cross papers seem to have died in December the same year in Auschwitz. My mother, who weighed before the war 80 kg. was detained at the Auschwitz "Experiment Lager", Block 10 where she was sterilized and tortured by the monster Dr. Mengele, but kept her alive. She returned to Holland after she participated in the famous "Death March" with a weight of 30kg. During the war, I wrote a letter, which I requested my foster parents to send to my parents, which of course they didn't. as they most probably had no idea of their where about, When my mother returned to Holland, back from "hell", one of the first things she did, was to try and discover where her son is. During the war my mother was pregnant, but was told it was dangerous to bring a child into the chaos, so she aborted.

Now she had to find her only son. An office was opened in Amsterdam called OPK , where clergymen, who were connected with the underground movement tried to reconcile addresses of hidden children. Fortunately a minister had heard my name and assumed I was staying in a village in the North called Blija. As no trains or buses ran, destroyed by the Germans, my mother took the "Lemmerboat" to the province of Friesland. On the boat, I believe in miracles, she met a Jew, called De Hond, who she told him her story. He said, you will not be able to reach Blija today. I offer you to stay overnight at my place in Leeuwarden and I will call my daughter, who was hidden 5km away from Blija....in Holwerd. Of course she knew me. They called my foster parents, but they did not inform me, about what was going on.

REUNITED WITH MY MOTHER

My foster father, who was a very shrewd man, collected during the war gas. No one was allowed to have electricity, we had. It was forbidden to raise cattle, we had in the backyard a pig. etc.

-3-

The next day. I was peeling potatoes (for a big family of 10), when I saw my foster father giving a Jerrican of benzin to a Dutch soldier, who came by motorbike, which was kept in a hiding place under the floor. I went to school and during lunch break, I returned home, but when I wanted to go back to school after lunch, I was told that I could not go and play marbles, but stay at home and enter the shop window (Father was a plumber and sold sanitary equipment) and watch the street. In the meantime, I was surrounded by the whole family, when suddenly the same soldier arrived on his motorbike carrying a skinny and dark woman in the backseat. Mainly people up north are blonde with blue eyes, My foster mother asked me, who that woman was, I replied, I do not know. She said, look again and I screamed: "That's my mother". The whole surrounding started to cry.

RETURN TO AMSTERDAM AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

She stayed about 2 weeks and gained some weight and then we returned to Amsterdam, where we lived temporarily with an ex-neighbour. Later my mom received a flat in the same complex where we lived before the war.

SCHOOL

I changed 3 schools in Amsterdam, mainly as my mother had to work and feed us. She found a job in a Jewish Orphanage as a leader, but was told her son had to move from a secular school to a Jewish school. For my mother Amsterdam was like a cemetery due to the fact wherever she went, used to live a family member before the war. Cousins , uncles, parents but no one returned. Only one cousin and my mother's brother did return.

EMIGRATION

The purpose of the Orphanage was to send the Jewish orphans to Israel to help and build the Jewish State, Israel, which was founded officially in 1948, but in 1946, she was told she could emigrate unofficially, provided she agreed to be separated from me, as I will follow with the orphans. As she was separated from me during the war for more than 3 years, she refused. In 1948, she was employed by the Dutch Zionist Federation, who convinced her to start a new life in Israel, so only in 1952 we emigrated to Israel, where we settled in a kibbutz called Huliot or Sde Nehemia.

ISRAEL

As my mother had too many associations with a concentration camp (barbwire, floodlight and eventual shooting due to the fact it was close to the Lebanese border), she decided to leave and we moved to other areas. During the next 6 months I lived in 3 more kibbutzim, in which one of them my first name was changed to Uri. In 1953, I enrolled at the Hotel Management school, as my knowledge of various European languages was an asset. In 1954 I joined the Israeli army and served as a truck driver.

-4-

MOTHER'S DEATH

-4-

My mother passed away in 1990 at the age of 76 due to breast cancer, which maybe even a result of the Dr. Mengele's experiments, who knows? She spent the last few years in a Dutch Parent's home in Haifa.

MUSIC

During my army service, I happened to be the driver of a high rank officer. I used to sing when I drove him. He decided, I have a good voice and should develop it. I told him, if he enables me to take lessons, I will. I started off with a teacher, who said, my future was in singing, but I had to make a living after my army service, so I found a job in Eilat in a hotel. My girlfriend, who completed her study as a social worker decided to do apprenticeship in Eilat, but my music teacher advised me, I will miss a one time success in life. My girlfriend explained my situation to her school manager, who arranged me an exam at the Music Academy in Jerusalem. who offered me a 4 year scholarship. So I moved to Jerusalem

MY CAREER

After my army service, I spent a while in the hotel business, but unfortunately business was slack due to hostility and I was employed by a few banks. During my study, I sang in a few choirs. In one of the banks I met my future wife. In 1963, we moved from Jerusalem to Tel-Aviv. I was employed in a few banks and my lucky number "13" came in 1966 i.e. my 13th employer, but the best for the next 32 years was TWA, an airline which went bankrupt in 2001.

RETIREMENT

Fortunately I retired early in 1998, after being offered 70% of my last salary and in September 2001, I officially retired receiving my monthly pension.

NEXT GENERATIONS

I have 2 children. My son (1967) lives in Holland with my lovely daughter in law, married with one child, who own 4 jewelry shops, and my daughter (1973), who is a choreographer and owns her MA degree in business administration and lives in Israel.

HOBBIES

Swimming, Cycling, Singing & languages



Mom&Dad 1931



Photographs: 1 With my mother on a scooter. 2. My craft in nursery school. 3. "My church" 4. My hiding place 5. school photograph 6th grade

<http://www.joodsmonument.nl/?lang=en>



In 1976 I planted together with my foster brother a tree in Yad Veshem being part of "**Righteous among the Nations**"

In February 2010 the only daughter still alive, at the age of 84, arrived from Canada. We visited "our tree". See pictures



קורנליס, אקה ווילם 740
וואן דער הופ
CORNELIS, AKKE ET WILLEM
VAN DER HOOP
18. 10. 1976 HOLLAND

7/2/2010 15:42

