

## MAURICE VANDERPOL

I was born in Amsterdam, Holland on July 12, 1922 on the second floor of a house that belonged to my maternal grandfather, Opa Simon (OPA is Dutch for grandpa) and grandmother Oma Griet (short for Marghariet.) We lived there with my grandparents for about a year and a half and then moved with them to a better area in a fairly new part of Amsterdam. Oma Griet and my mother ran a millinery store in the house where I was born.

During the 19th century rough diamonds were discovered in South Africa. Amsterdam became a main center for the diamond industry. A new labor market developed there consisting of skilled labor that processed rough diamonds that looked like real rocks into the finished ones you see in jewelry. Jewish citizens who had been barred from membership in occupational guilds now founded a diamond industrial guild. While my whole ancestral family had been working in various aspects of this industry, my father decided to take a big step 'up' and became a diamond merchant. Once he started doing well selling his precious wares to jewelers, he told my grandmother, his mother-in-law, and his wife, "you have worked hard enough and don't need to work any more". We moved to a new home. My mother was expecting my younger brother, Jim, who is two years younger than I. I went to a special kindergarten and then to public elementary school.

What I remember about that second house was the swing in the back; one of those square swings for small children with bars on all sides. I also remember that my grandfather, Simon, kept chickens there in the small city garden in back of the house. He picked up the eggs every day which was fascinating to me. Opa Simon always kept a dog which my grandmother grudgingly tolerated. Once, so the story went, he brought home a Saint Bernard dog, the big type of dog that is used to find people lost in the snow in the mountains. My grandma was very upset with him, but big-heartedly and reluctantly said it was okay to keep it. The end came when one day the dog went to sleep under the dining room table, woke up and, being as big as he was, walked away carrying the table on his back. That was the end of the dog staying with them.

When I was 6 years old we moved to a nicer neighborhood with my maternal grandparents still living with us. It was a really large apartment with two floors, called a 'lower' house with a ground and a second floor with two stories above, the upper house with a separate stairway all the way up. Oma Griet, observed Orthodox Judaism with some flexibility. She was a very nice grandmother who knitted all our clothes. The knitted underwear for boys was designed by her with a holon in the front and a flap in the back that you could unbutton and open for necessary use. I proudly went to school and in gym had to take off my outer clothes and put on my gym clothes. My mother, who had purchased them, did not realize that girls wear different gym clothes than boys. Imagine my embarrassment when I stood in front of my classmates of boys laughing at my outfit!

A very important issue in my childhood was the fact that my father and many other 'diamantairs' raveled to Antwerp, Belgium every week, leaving home on Monday pm and returning on Friday pm. That meant that he was basically not available almost 4 days a week and also had to rest from his travels when he returned home. I missed him dreadfully and the older I got, the more I realized what a gap that created in my formative years. No wonder that one of my fondest memories were the Friday nights. All day Friday my mother would cook and would work cleaning the home together with our live-in maid and a cleaning woman. This was a Dutch custom, cleaning till the cows came home. On Fridays I remember the waft of delicious food being prepared and, as a special treat, the challah bread that was delivered. In Holland the challah was round and had a long worm like crust on top. The first thing my brother and I did was to pick off pieces of that crust and dip them in butter and eat them. What a treat! Isn't it funny how you remember these special little delights as well as the special little embarrassments from so long ago. It gives memories a special poignancy.

My father worked on Saturday and Sunday in Amsterdam in the diamond exchange because on Saturday, the Christian merchants were there and on Sunday, the Jewish merchants. So he worked seven days a week really. Friday nights were special because the family would gather. I have very fond memories, particularly the earlier part, because Oma Griet, would play the piano and my father would sing songs in Dutch, English, French and German. We knew all those languages because we learned those languages in school, starting with French in the 4th grade, adding German in 7<sup>th</sup>, and English, the relatively easiest language except for the unpredictable pronunciation, in 8th grade. My father had a nice, but unskilled voice. French songs were his favorite as my parents were very 'francophile'. Everything French was wonderful; my wife and I still feel very much that way. After a delicious dinner served on special china my father would sing some of 20 songs and they are still my favorite. My wife had exactly the opposite experiences. Her parents always complained about Friday night because they had to attend some formal family dinner that was no fun at all. So we had this difference. I would stop working on Friday at the end of the day and have this conditioned reflex that there was going to be something special and when there wasn't, there was always a sort of a feeling of disappointment. So those are fond memories. Now if I'm realistic and honest about those years, Friday nights often included arguments. Nobody ever got physical, but there sometimes was a lot of tension. Everybody was very fond of my grandmother who unfortunately became quite incapacitated and bedridden for a long time and died at home in 1931 when I was nine years old. In Holland, Saint Nicholas, our Santa Claus, does not come on Christmas, but on the evening of the fifth of December. It

is a non-sectarian special event with certain established customs so exciting to us, children. Inexpensive presents were exchanged. You might get a package with your name on it, but when unwrapped, it had somebody else's name and you had to hand it over, never knowing where it would end up and what your present might be. Each present had a little rhyme. Saint Nicholas, patron saint of children was not dressed like Kris Kringle, but as a bishop with a miter and a long red robe that you could rent everywhere for the occasion. He would come with his black servant and if you had been good, you would get a present and if you had been bad, you would get the switch on your backside. As kids, we were afraid of Saint Nicholas' arrival would not knowing whether he really knew if we had been bad or good. My grandmother, who was bed ridden upstairs, would knock on the floor with her cane like Saint Nicholas was coming, and we would have to go upstairs and be very scared about who and what we would find. Of course he was not there, but the basket with the presents waited for us and that was a big, big evening.

The most significant night of the year in Holland was New Year's Eve; it was totally different from the noisemaking festival that is celebrated in the US usually out on the town. The celebration was more like Thanksgiving. We celebrated in homes with my extended family, primarily my mother's. The lights would be turned off at five minutes to midnight and we would silently and privately reflect on the year and then at midnight, we would turn on the lights and toast in the New Year, followed in the typical Dutch fashion with a sumptuous and festive meal.

I was named after my paternal grandfather, Opa M, short for Moses. Because my parents were very French oriented, they called me Maurice. My grandfather had three daughters who were my aunts on my father's side. One I never knew; the other two who lived with their parents I knew very well. My grandmother Oma Hein (short for Henriette) died in 1929 of cancer, and it was the first time I saw my father cry. We couldn't go to the funeral because children were not allowed to attend. I remember my other grandmother's funeral in '31. First of all there was the coffin in the house with the minyan, the 10 men who did the praying. There was a sea of flowers. People were buried from the home, Jewish or otherwise, the coffin was put on a hearse, with friends and family walking behind the hearse to the end of the street and then closest family and friends would get into the various coaches or cars to stop at the synagogue. I still have an image of seeing my mother crying her heart out as her mother's coffin was driven away with the men only, to the cemetery for burial. According to the orthodox Jewish custom, women were not supposed to go to the cemetery. I can still see her standing there and I remember what she looked like, what she was wearing, crying bitter, bitter tears seeing her mother, whom she loved so much, go away. I was not allowed to go because I was too young.

Opa Simon, who lived with us, was a more difficult person, but he was a very handsome guy. Any Nazi 'Aryan' would have been jealous to look like him. He was a tall man, blond hair and my mother, while she was not tall, was also blond and blue eyed like my brother and I. (My daughter, too, has the same features.) It was a very interesting situation since my wife had very black hair and very dark eyes. Opa Simon would fix things for us, he was a tinkerer, and I am embarrassed that we did not really express our appreciation for all the ways he helped us. In one memory I see myself as the 5 year old boy whose Opa made a little cabinet for toys out of an old orange crate for me. Opa Simon died during the war from cancer, but still had a 'normal' death with a funeral because it was just before the persecutions started.

My parents only had a sixth grade education, but both spoke three languages: Dutch, French and English. My father was familiar with Dutch literature and would recite parts to us parts which I still remember to this day. The first trade union of any kind in Holland was the one for Diamond workers. It was not only to improve their lot in terms of housing, but particularly to improve and make available adult education. So there was a lot of pressure on my brother and me to be the first and to be the best in school and also to stand up for ourselves.

Since I was a little boy, Opa Mo would pick me up at my home every Saturday morning and would take me to his home by streetcar. As I am writing this history, now as an old man, I am ever more impressed how much these early experiences influenced me in my later life.. I was the eldest grandson in the family and could do no wrong. At Opa Mo's Oma Hein I would love to play at the sink and Opa surprised me one day by bringing me a little enamel water kettle that I played with for some time. As I grew older I continued my visits and appreciated him in a different way. Opa Mo lived in the old Jewish neighborhood. He was a very strong person, physically like my other grandfather; they were physical fighters and you could not push them around. But with me, he was totally tolerant and we talked and he told me about his background, gave me examples of what happened with his father who was a fanatic Orthodox Jew who, on the Shabbat while praying in the synagogue when told that his other son had died, wouldn't start to mourn until nightfall. I felt that he was fully accepting me and I didn't have to perform for him. He made fun of himself which nobody in our family did very much. He would take his false teeth out and make a mouth that looked almost like a fish or the Portuguese fishermen on a painting in our home. I have a very lively memory of the stories he told me especially the ones about growing up in a very religious family, rebelling against the severe rules by which an orthodox Jew was supposed to live. He abandoned the religious dictates and became an atheist. This trend has been passed on to my father and to me in turn. In fact one, of my most vivid and 'proud' memories is going to lunch on Yom Kippur with my father and grandfather while my mother was fasting.

It was my parents' goal in life to make things better for us, especially to have a good education. I was also very close to my brother and still am. I am two years older than he. I was always rather serious and duty bound. As the oldest son, I

took the place of my father who was away on business so much. This fact played a very important role in my and my brother's life. My mother took her role as a parent very, very, very seriously culminating during the Holocaust when she was to save my life. I was very protective and took care of my brother because he was easily frightened and was often sick. But I was the older brother, the 'man in the family who never had any problems'. I took that role very seriously.

Growing up, we moved to 'better' neighborhoods where most of my neighbors were not Jewish. I missed the old neighborhood which was so different from where we now lived. My father was an atheist and he had absolutely no interest in Orthodox Judaism. My mother wanted me to be bar mitzvah and I was. My father carried the expense of the service and the big celebration that followed. It was a big deal. I remember studying 'Jewish lessons' with other kids and being teenagers and finding a lot of what we were told about Judaism rather strange. We just laughed and made fun of the whole thing. We would meet at somebody's home. The first teacher was a lady who wore low cut dresses. We were adolescents and every time she bent forward, we would look in and we would gleefully talk about it. We didn't take the whole thing very seriously. The preparation for the bar mitzvah service was more serious. The service was very impressive but some of the women were very upset that they had to sit separately upstairs behind bars. Then my Opa Mo, who had the honor of raising the Torah and showing it to the congregation, almost dropped it, but somebody caught it before a calamity occurred. I also remember that I was quite tall and the rabbi was quite small and I had to bend through my knees so he could bless me. Then there was a big party with lots of presents, but the most important present was brought by Opa Mo, the aforementioned little kettle. He had it bronzed (my grandmother had died in the meantime), and, as is customary in Holland, it was filled with red carnations. I remembered the little kettle even though it looked a little different. It was such an ordinary little kettle, but it carried such important memories for me.

Later in the thirties, the deterioration set in the Weimar Republic-Germany. My mother's relatives, who many years before had moved to Berlin to start a business, sent us bags of worthless German money. We played games with it, unaware of the horrors behind it. It was very colorful money, not just a single currency, but all different ones, from various parts of Germany. In the mid 1930ies when the two uncles with families fled Germany and came to Amsterdam, my mother was very instrumental in welcoming them and helping them to get settled again. During the First World War the Germans had not invaded Holland. Like Sweden, it had been neutral. Conveniently, most of us were convinced, despite the unsettling news from across the border, that we wouldn't be invaded and so we sort of pooh-poohed the whole thing. We knew what was going on to some degree and Kristallnacht, 'the night of broken glass' in November, 1938 was ominous news. Jews were hurt and even killed and Jewish shops were destroyed. At that time I was going to public school with a curriculum that mainly focused on languages, economics and government. I had friends from all backgrounds, Christians and Jews or no religion. It didn't make any difference. Yet among older Jews there was an undertone of uneasiness with non Jews that we, as children could sense but never questioned. It probably dated back to the days of life in the old Jewish neighborhood. I was held back in the seventh grade. I had just not been ready for abstractions like algebra and other mathematical brain-gymnastics. The repeat served me well because after that I was in the top of the class through the end of high school. I had a pretty good time and do not remember any overt antisemitism. In retrospect I can see that it was camouflaged in certain circles like restricted clubs. Among us Jewish citizens I never experienced any name calling and I don't think most other Jews had either. After Kristallnacht, many German Jews fled to safety in Holland. We did not have much sympathy for them. The German Jews were more German than Jews and were very different from the Dutch Jews. We had always been afraid of being ostentatious with diamonds and furs which we, as Dutch Jews, avoided so as not to stand out among the rest of the population. There now was that unspoken, underlying fear of them being so openly ostentatious and how they reminded us of what they had been through having to flee from their homes and their 'fatherland'. In retrospect and as hard as it is to admit, the intra-Jewish antisemitism became an important dynamic in the years to come. It was among better situated Jews against the more 'ordinary' Jews and against the ostentatious German Jews.

I also remember that one of the German boys in my class in high school would get up and stand at attention whenever the teacher came in. We all were looking at him, totally amazed at what he was doing and why he was doing it. We didn't understand it because the Dutch in general are unceremonious. We don't say prayers; we don't say anything to honor the flag or the queen. We just sit down and start work. There were a lot of funny things going on in school with teasing the teachers and other shenanigans. So we denied that anything was threatening us. However, at a certain point I remember in 1938 my parents, my brother and I sat down together and talked about whether we should leave. How serious was the danger? My mother said: "Well my family is here and why don't we wait until the kids are finished with school..." So we stayed.

In August of '39, my brother and I went to the south of England on a bicycle tour, staying at youth hostels. On the day we were coming back, World War II broke out when Germany invaded Poland and England declared war. My father moved heaven and earth to get us back to Holland. I don't know what would have happened if we had stayed in England. On Friday the 10th of May 1940, very early in the morning in darkness the Germans started bombing and invading Holland from the East. They were moving very rapidly into and through our country. We, in Amsterdam on the west side of the country were considering going to a harbor on the North Sea about 30 miles away to get on any boat to cross to England to escape, but we had no means of private transportation. Many, who tried, found the Germans machine-

gunning refugees from the air. A number of people who had offered money to fishermen to get them across to England, escaped, but many got killed. We never got there. After four days the Dutch queen, Wilhelmina, fled to England with her family and on May 15 the Germans occupied Holland. It was 1940 and I was 17 years old.

The first thing I remember hearing on that infamous day in May was the air raid alarm's ominous howling, anti-aircraft shooting and seeing a plane being hit and the pieces falling into the street. We were sitting on the stairs as that was supposed to be the safest place in the house. We were not prepared for such a disastrous threat. After four and a half days it was all over and everything returned to quiescence. As mentioned before, for many years the diamond industry and trade had moved from Amsterdam to Antwerp, Belgium. My father, a diamond merchant had to stay in Antwerp, Belgium and be away from home usually leaving home every Monday afternoon and returning Friday afternoon. As the Germans now were invading and occupying the Netherlands, Belgium and France, my father, still in Antwerp could not get back to Amsterdam. The Germans had expected the Dutch to be very supportive and to receive them with open arms. Little did they realize that they still had a reputation from World War I. They had a very different mentality than the Dutch – I'm generalizing. Nobody liked the Germans except for the collaborators, who shot some of our own people from the back. Holland was very much a democracy with all the familiar freedoms and rights. A question, of course, that comes back now in regards to the Dutch Nazis, is how much do you allow potential enemies in your own country to have free range as a so-called '5th column'?

I went back to high school, took final exams, and graduated in June. Prince Bernard, the son-in-law of Queen Wilhelmina (married to, Juliana, at that time the crown princess), used to wear a white carnation on his lapel and on his birthday many graduates sported a white carnation when a class photo was taken as a demonstration against the Germans. Several other such occasions during the occupation were used by the Dutch to demonstrate their alliance to the Royal House. We felt that maybe the Germans mistakenly assumed that we would feel "honored" to get a Nazi government of occupation, not a Military government. The implication here is that a Nazi party government would be much tougher and severe on our Dutch population. This made it very hard for Holland and the Dutch to do anything against the Germans. An Austrian, Dr Seyss Inquart, was to take over the government and guarantee that all the laws would be honored.

That first year I wanted to enroll in Amsterdam University to study medicine and I was admitted. (In Europe Undergraduate college does not exist; you go from secondary school straight to the University to study a profession). At the same time I had to make up courses in biology, math, physics and chemistry because I did not have enough credits to go on in the Medical School. I am amazed to remember doing this mostly on my own with books on the subject during a time of such stress! At the end of that academic year, I took the state exam on those missed subjects, passed all, and then a month later, passed the exams of the first year in Med School. After the pre-med I was able to continue the clinical studies. Although I didn't pass one subject, the professor knew the predicament I was in as a Jew and passed me anyway.

In the early months of 1941 the first anti-Jewish measures became evident. We were to sign papers about our family affiliation, especially how many Jewish grandparents each one of us had. Since we'd been paying members of the Jewish community association and cemetery organization all these years, they had records of who our Jewish grandparents were and so we were reluctant to lie about it though we should have. Dutch people were very law abiding citizens. We trusted the government. Now to suddenly change your loyalty to a government, a hateful, quasi-Dutch government put us in a serious quandary. During that time when we were getting a taste of what was to become increasingly a threat to our life. We needed to take certain lifesaving illegal actions. We used to joke, that after the war ended and our legal government had returned, we would have to fill out a questionnaire asking us if during the war we were ever in jail? If not, why not? And so we reported four Jewish grandparents. Now the Germans instituted an identity card, a document that never existed before in this Holland. The Jewish card had a big fat J stamped on it. Then we were 'honored' to wear the Star of David, with the Dutch word for Jew, 'JOOD'. Later in 1941, all Jewish students were told that they were to leave the university. There were several reactions. Some of the professors openly remonstrated against that law. Some of the fraternities, including a fraternity that didn't allow Jews, remonstrated against the exclusion of Jewish students and were closed by the Germans. The third and most important and courageous action was taken by the Dean of the medical school who founded an underground Jewish medical school that he called 'School for Gymnastics and Massage'. We went to Jewish professors' homes and continued our course and got secret credit. Note: After the end of the war when I had survived the same dean re-opened his department of the Medical School and I found those credits and they were valid!

At that point much more serious things started to happen. As a result of the anti-Jewish measures thousands of Amsterdam blue collar workers like street car conductors, utility workers, dock workers went on strike to demonstrate against the Nazis perpetrating their party line in creating these hateful anti-Jewish measures against fellow-Dutch citizens. In reprisal the Nazis invaded the Jewish neighborhood and closed all the bridges that gave access so that no-one could escape and arrested many occupants who were shipped to Westerbork camp, the collection camp for arrested Jews before they were sent 'EAST' to what later turned out to be the infamous death camps. After the war the city built a statue symbolizing a dockworker, symbolizing all the courageous Dutch people who expressed their profound objection to

the cruelty displayed. The statue is in the center of where the old Jewish neighborhood used to be. Every February there is a silent parade of people headed by the Mayor and the whole square is covered with flowers in remembrance.

A prominent German was shot and killed. As a reprisal, the SS police suddenly invaded the Jewish rowing club on the Amstelriver. It was a Saturday afternoon and there were many Jewish boys and young men there whom were arrested...hundreds of them. They were sent to the concentration camp, Mauthausen, a quarry where they were put to 'WORK'. Three months later most families received a card saying that their son had died of pneumonia. We were all familiar with Mauthausen at that point. As time went on the raids arresting Jewish boys and young men at their home or in the streets became a regular routine. The chief of police needed to be included in this effort because the Germans needed his officers to do the dirty work. That was a blessing in disguise. When the chief of police was notified by the German Command that they needed the police force for the action, he in turn would call a group of his friends who then called many Jewish families with sons to tell them to get lost to avoid their arrest. My brother and I would get the call and 2 women friends of the family would receive us in their apartment for the duration of the danger. We would stay a few days. That was the beginning of the hiding.

Sometime in early 1942, signs appeared in public places and parks announcing "Prohibited for Jews," "No entrance for Jews". We eventually couldn't walk on the sidewalk, or use the streetcar, a popular way of transportation since only few people owned cars. We also had to hand in our bicycles. Things started getting pretty rough and I had to drop out of the secret medical school because of all the raids on Jewish young men and boys. In order to be exempt from deportation, for a while, I was able to get a job as an aide in an institution called 'The Jewish Invalid House'. There were also a number of other young men who had been studying medicine working there. That was one way to postpone any deportation. I had a special stamp on my identity card that allowed me to walk there and back every day. It was at the other end of the city. Working there, I was suddenly involved with the Orthodox Jewish establishment and so I learned a lot of Jewish customs and religious life. I was becoming more and more a victim who kept trying to survive, mentally and physically, against enormous odds that became more threatening as time passed.

In the mean time my father, my mother's brother and his wife who lived in Antwerp and had a car available, were able to escape the onslaught of the German forces and eventually had found a place in a small isolated village in unoccupied France. They were given a nice house, and helped by the mayor of the town. When my uncle suddenly died, he was buried in the family tomb of the mayor. We were able to stay in contact with them via a dentist in Switzerland as follows: We would write the dentist in Switzerland a card with a message in sort of family code, always talking about us in 3rd person as if it was not about us but about someone else. He in turn would put the letter in a new envelope and sent it on to my father. We did the same in return. After my uncle died and the future looked bleak in terms of surviving there, my father and my aunt, who was severely depressed after her husband's death, decided to go on. They went to Casablanca and then to Cuba where they were put in a camp. They took my father's stock of diamonds away. After a year they were liberated. The authorities returned all my father's confiscated possessions. Family and friends in New York helped him to get a Visa and with my aunt arrived in New York City in 1943. By then we were in hiding and lost contact. It was an ancient truth among the Jewish people who had so many times been exiled from countries where they lived, that one should have saved some gold or diamonds in case of extreme need. Since my father's business was in diamonds he had given my mother beautiful jewelry on very special occasions. Nothing else, especially money, was worth anything. As life became a more serious challenge, she would sell stone for stone and in that way we were able to keep going. And things became more serious and threatening.

By now the deportations had begun on a large scale. In Holland many Jewish families had been living in many places, including small villages for a long time and they wore the local costumes to Amsterdam so that the Germans would have them all together better to organize them for deportation. Jews were moved from the so-called medina, the countryside, to Amsterdam. At the end of '42 through '43 the real big push to cleanse Holland of Jews began. We started to talk about going into hiding to two cousins of my mother and to friends. The first break came when I was given a false identity card from a good friend, Egon von Blommestein, a former high school fellow-student, who spontaneously gave me his card after reporting it lost. The problem with the card was that first his picture had to be taken out and my picture had to be inserted. There was a stamp partly on the picture. Forgers in the underground completed the stamp on my picture. But there was another problem. Egon's identity card indicated that he had a scar on his right elbow. In order to deal with this I went to my cousin, a doctor, who made a superficial cut on my right arm and sutured it. After a few days a scar developed which made my identity card more bona fide. Many people reported their card lost and started a black market selling their so-called lost card. My mother and my brother were able to buy a card. Through friends and some of my mother's cousins, we found a place to hide and when our notice to report for deportation came, we disappeared. We had already very gradually and unobtrusively moved some precious things out of the house and left them with friends. I have been happy that these objects were preserved and why I still have some things like the Jewish stars I had to wear and also the little kettle. But most of what we owned was left because we didn't know who to trust in the street and who not to, if they ever would notice that we were about to vacate and vanish. My brother and I went to The Hague and stayed there in a beautiful upper-class home owned by a gay man and his partner who also served as his valet. We stayed there for a while until we had to leave. The house where we had stayed was located near the North Sea coast. The Germans made everybody evacuate their homes in order to destroy them and build fortifications along the coast in case the Allies would

invade from England. My brother and I split up. I was staying with a woman I had never met before. She had also given shelter to a Jewish girl. This woman would frequently tell us that 'a Jew and a louse are pests in your house'. She was clearly antisemitic, but she gave us shelter. I didn't stay there very long. I had a close call when I took a little fresh air one evening during the blackout. All of a sudden a German police officer shone a light in my face and asked for my identity card. He looked at it, gave it back to me, and said to go on. I was very calm when it happened, but the moment I walked away, I shook like a leaf. You often rise to the occasion when something is wrong and then when it's over, when the danger is over, you react

When I was still in The Hague, I was invited to a party (if you can believe that!) where there were several of my friends from Amsterdam including the one who gave me his identity card. The party took place in the upper 2 stories of a 4 story building. There was a door to the apartment on street level and, once inside, you walked all the way up to the 3rd floor. We were told that if the bell rang, we should be quiet. If my friend's mother sounded the alarm, she would cough and we should go to the roof and go over it to the house next door where the neighbors had offered an escape route in case of trouble. Then we could go down the stairs in that other house and out on another street. Well it did happen. In the morning the bell rang and we were heard her cough and I went up the roof, climbed over to the roof next door. The first place I found myself was in a bedroom with a couple who were still in bed. They looked at me as if I was an apparition, but they had consented to be used in that fashion. I quickly mumbled thanks and ran downstairs out into the street where, of all people, I met my friend Egon van Blommestein, the friend who gave me his identity card. Then we walked together in that street with exactly the same identity card, with the elbow scar, same birth date. That shows you a little bit of our foolishness, sort of adolescent kind of behavior denying the danger.

Now, there was one incident I remember very well. My mother used to fast on Yom Kippur. The first Yom Kippur we were separated, I decided to take the risk to go and see her where she was in hiding. She was in Amsterdam where I eventually ended up. With my false identity card as cover, I traveled to Amsterdam taking different interurban streetcars instead of the train to avoid being checked by the Nazi police. I arrived at the street where my mother was staying, at dusk and rang the bell. But nobody answered the door. I rang three times. When there was no answer, I thought there was something very wrong and I left. I don't remember where I stayed that night, but I felt terrible ...very lonely and terrible. When I got back to The Hague, it turned out they hadn't hear the bell and everything was okay. When I had to leave The Hague, I joined my mother in Amsterdam where I stayed the longest, about two years. My brother stayed in The Hague for the duration.

In Amsterdam the woman who hid my mother and me was elderly and unmarried. She used to be the housekeeper for my great aunt, Oma Griet's sister. This great aunt, Leen, (pronounced 'Lane' from Helena) and another woman who was a close family were also hidden there. The woman who hid us, Tine (pronounced 'Teenuh') Hoitzing, was a very religious Dutch Reformed Protestant. She considered it her duty to save 'the old people of Israel' – this was before there was the modern state of Israel. In Holland, we were called Israelites, not Jews. Tina had a small tenement apartment on the third floor of a five floor building in a lower-middleclass neighborhood. The rooms were all miniature, a front room, a middle room and a back room where she slept. There were also a kitchen, a toilet, no shower or bath and another little bedroom. On the ground floor a young couple lived with their own front door – the husband was a railroad worker. A separate ground floor entrance gave access to all the floors above. On the second floor lived a woman whom we couldn't figure out if she was trustworthy or not. She looked very slovenly and kept to herself. She was not supposed to know we were on the third floor, which was difficult as you had to pass by her apartment's front door to get up to the third floor. On the fourth floor there were Tine's sister, her husband and her daughter and on the fifth floor was the attic where we slept. In the beginning I went out too, but it was very, very risky. My blond haired, blue-eyed mother didn't look Jewish and had a good fake identitycard, she went out. Because Tine was elderly, my mother started grocery shopping and other outdoor errands. She told neighbors, using the jargon of that neighborhood, that Tine Hoitzing was her aunt and that she had come to live with her to help her through these hard times of war and deprivation. They would tell her that they could see the family resemblance!

Tine also had a brother who visited her every single day and who was not to know that we were hidden there. He would ring the bell and we would have time to disappear. But when someone failed to close the door to the street, her brother would just walk up and not ring the bell. If he had found out about us, he would have immediately insisted that she get rid of us. He never found out. She would keep him talking in the hallway while we were slipping out. We built a hiding place in the middle room behind a false wall of made of cinder blocks. How we did that I will never know! There was a pushcart in the street with all the materials on it that were being taken upstairs. I don't know what people thought we were doing! But we built it. You went to the back panel of a clothes closet in the front room, pushed the panel, and entered into the hiding place through the opening. The shelter was about a foot wide and six feet long and the four of us could stand there next to each other. And then the panel was pushed back in place. We never had to use it although one time it was very close. The Nazi police were raiding every block of our long street, starting at the other end. We were the last block and they gave up without searching our block.

At a certain point the Germans required everyone to hand in their radio so as to prevent us from tuning in to the London BBC. Tine had refused to hand in hers. We put the radio in the hiding place on a little shelf high on the wall. I had

learned English enough to understand what they were talking about. I listened to that radio every day, several times a day. At first the signal was faint. The radios at that time required a big antenna wire and that was not possible. The Germans has some kind of electronic detection instrument which they used in cars cruising through the streets to detect anyone who was using a radio with antenna. There was a wire hanging down from the radio serving as antenna. One day I, for some unknown reason, put the end of that wire in my mouth and suddenly the volume increased to such a degree that is could hear every word spoken so far away. That enabled me to hear the allied news because the German news or the Dutch news,

was all worthless, all doctored. Now we could tell other people the latest Allied news. I would stand there with the antenna in my mouth, my body serving as an antenna. Much later in 1944 the electricity was cut off, I couldn't use my radio anymore. I rigged up a 'crystal receiver' which did not require electric power and was made up of a red copper coil antenna that I would hang up.

To pass the time, I was reading, reading. In the morning we'd pick fleas out of the blankets because in Holland, in Europe, you have specific fleas that jump around on people. They hide in blankets at night and if you didn't pick everyday, you would be covered with bites. I tried to learn Russian. Tine had a young nephew who needed help and I tutored him. He knew who we were. His father had been an officer in the Dutch army, now a prisoner of war in Germany. Deportations were now in full swing-Jews were arrested and sent to Westerbork, a detention camp in the eastern part of the Netherlands in a desolate, thinly populated area. From there inmates were shipped on to places 'East'. We knew no details but there were rumors and stories about horrible things happening in and around Germany, but we didn't know any details. What was happening with my grandfather and with the rest of my family and friends who were taken away? Who could in their wildest imaginations conceive of gas chambers or similar horrors. Who could have imagined that any man or woman could be so dehumanized to perpetrate the horrors that came to light after the end of the War? We thought that they were all in slave labor camps and that the many that died were the weak and the old, but that young people could survive.

I don't know exactly when it was the last time I saw my grandfather, but I do remember one incident that is etched in my mind. The first New Year's Eve of the war, he, my aunts, and a nephew were with us for the evening. While New Year's eve in Holland was traditionally the most important in-house family celebration, this time it was a very sad New Year's Eve, but we tried to make something of it. There was a French song my father used to sing called 'J'attendrai', "I am waiting for you". That evening my mother started singing it or it was recorded on the radio, I don't remember, but suddenly that song started, "j' attendrai, le jour et la nuit, j'attendrai toujours, ton retour" (I will wait, day and night I will wait your return). My mother began to weep and one of my aunts started shaking uncontrollably. In my mind, I still see my Opa Mo with his daughter, small but a grown woman, gently holding her on his lap while she was having this seizure. I can see that and the whole scene was so utterly sad, sad.. I don't remember when I saw him last and I have lived with guilt that I didn't do more to help Opa Mo. As a matter of fact I would say that until about 15 years ago (it is now 51 years later) if I would mention his name I would start weeping. I was afraid I'd never stop. That's how I mourned him and still do. Very few people knew where we were. Some of our friends would come and bring things and news, usually bad news about other people. That's how it was. But we were not sitting there shaking and crying except when there suddenly was a real reason for it that would break down our rigid emotional control. The other woman who was there, Heddy, had two sons. While we were in hiding, one of them was caught without a star and sent to the camps and never heard from; the other one was shot.

One thing that kept us going was we our sense of humor. We laughed a lot, unbelievable, but we did. And the jokes were sort of sick jokes that were typical of the times. Example: On a very busy street in downtown Amsterdam a Dutch woman was walking pushing her baby in a carriage. A German officer stopped her and asked permission to pick up her baby and hold it because he had a baby in Germany he was thinking of. To do anything kind for a German was a 'no-no' at the time but she was afraid to say no so she let him. He held the baby, then put the baby back, thanked her and walked away. A few minutes later she heard a shot and she saw that he had killed himself and was lying in blood on the sidewalk. This story that night made the headlines in the newspapers. The next morning it was impossible to walk in that street because it was crowded with Dutch women pushing baby carriages waiting for Germans. There was also another story that was sort of funny. There was a saying in Germany by the Nazis: Ein Folk, ein Reich, ein Fuehrer, one people, one country, one leader. There was a shoe shiner and before he started his routine of polishing, he would say "Ein Folk, ein Reich, ein Fuehrer". Then in his customary way spit on the shoe and polish it!

Then there were all the predictions of how soon the war would be over. Nostradamus, an internationally known astrologist, was quoted left and right predicting the future. We were so apprehensive about how it all would end! But then on the 6th of June 1944, I listened to my radio early in the morning and I began to hear something about an invasion in Normandy, something for which we had been waiting, waiting, waiting. By that time The German's eastern front after Stalingrad had turned against them. The Allies had also crossed the Mediterranean Sea from Africa and had landed in Italy. But that second front on the French side of Channel coast in Normandy was so important. I don't know exactly what happened to me, but for about a week I didn't speak. I was totally immobilized. I guess it was unbelievable that it was

happening. But the worse was yet to come, of course. By this time all the Jews were gone except the ones in hiding. My mother, though, continued to go shopping what there was left to shop. Stores were emptier and emptier.

June 6, 1944 was the turning point in the struggle: the Allied invasion in Normandy, France. I heard it announced on my hidden radio and it is hard to imagine for anyone who was not there what that news meant to us. We might have a chance to 'make it', to survive. By September '44 the Allies were all over France and close to Germany. This is also when the Supreme Commander of Allied forces was General Dwight Eisenhower, a superb leader, the right man at the right time. During that winter of 1944-1945 the Battle of the Bulge took place in Belgium, and British General Montgomery and allied troops were approaching through the southern part of the Netherlands, separated from the North (where we were) by three big rivers. Then followed the bloody battle to cross the Rhine river tributary near the city of Arnhem. That day, that Sunday, we saw the allied planes fly over by the thousands! We were wondering what was going on? Were the Allies helping Montgomery cross the rivers? The Germans were putting all their available panzer divisions into action and they just killed all the Allies as documented in the movie 'A Bridge Too Far'. So while people were already waiting at the outskirts of Amsterdam for the Allies to arrive to rescue us on what we call Mad Tuesday in September 1944, this battle was a disaster. We were not going to be liberated until May 5, 1945. That winter became the worst for everyone left: the Nazi Government cut off electric power, gas and the food supply. Everything was taken to Germany. As most of the country, including the city of Amsterdam, is below sea level and because the power to the pump stations was cut, the groundwater was rising everywhere including in the cities. Because we were out of money my mother had to start bartering with valuables in order to have enough money to obtain whatever food there was on the black market to have some food for all of us. Since she had the jewelry that my father had given her on special occasions, she had a chance to use them for an unexpected purpose, to not go hungry. Once she was tricked and deceived by somebody whom she gave a gem and promised to bring her the potatoes, but never returned. Tine now was also the beneficiary of this food supply. It was very rough because we were very hungry anyway. I lost all the weight that was possible without collapsing and developed edema of the legs. Many people died. Interestingly enough, there was very little flu, colds or other viral diseases because we were not fed well enough for even the virus to live. There were a lot of non-viral, communicable diseases like typhoid and typhus that terrified the Germans.

At one time we learned that a certain church was distributing potatoes. My mother and Heddy, another co-hider at Tine's, were able to get a push-cart to go to this church. It was quite a distance away. On the way back, the cart got stuck in the streetcar tracks right in front of the building where the SS was housed; a guard in front. The two women couldn't get the cart out of the tracks. The guard noticing the trouble the women were in, put his rifle down, walked over to them, and helped them pull the cart out off of the tracks! After the guard had successfully extricated the cart, my mother said to this German, in what I hope was lousy German, "You are crazy standing here on guard in the cold freezing your butt off, while Hitler is drinking champagne in Berlin. Why don't you quit?" Chutzpah!! But they came home with the potatoes. We still had some peas and beans and a few cans. Pretending to ourselves that we were having a break for 'Tea', we heated some water with little pieces of wood, put some brown, tasteless powder in the water and pretended drinking the make-believe-tea. When we had to cook, we used a special kind of contraption made out of a big juice can. We put it on top of the stove in the living room and with small pieces of wood on a little grate, we would cook one dish. If we wanted 'fried' potatoes (if we had potatoes) we'd take a frying pan and rub it around with a cork because the cork was a little greasy. We had hamburgers made of oatmeal, not a bit of meat in it, but we made believe. It was filling.

We were never afraid that Tine would betray us although we were hearing of several cases of betrayal for which the Germans offered money. I was a little concerned about the sister upstairs. But we became essential to them; they would not have survived without my mother's successful efforts to barter for food which Tine nor the family upstairs had the means to do. We did have some contact with my brother and knew that he was alive and 'safe' in The Hague. The only thing he and his host family worried about was when the Germans started with those V-1 and V-2 rockets, aimed across the North Sea at England. 60% of them failed. When the noise of the motor would stop, everybody would hold their breath wondering where the rocket was going to drop and explode in the neighborhood! My brother went through some difficult times. On one occasion, as he was staying with an elderly couple, the husband insisted that my brother should leave because the risk of hiding a Jew put them at too great a risk of being found out. The wife insisted that my brother had to stay with them until the end of the war. She fortunately prevailed.

I also want to mention about a former theater that became the place of deportation. Walter Suskind, a German Jew who fled to Holland in 1938, was put in charge on behalf of the Jewish Council of doing the dirty work for the Germans. Jewish families were brought in, their names were put on file, and then a few days later they were told that that night they would be taken to the trains and go to Westerberg, a Dutch concentration camp. Walter secretly arranged with for all the children who were taken away from the parents when they arrived to be put in a separate place across the street. When they learned who was going to be deported, they would go to the parents and offer to hide the children. If the parents consented, the children, small children, were taken in laundry bags and backpacks and to the countryside where ministers in the north or Roman Catholic priests in the south would find safe places for them. Most of the parents never came back. It is estimated that about 1000 children were saved this way and none of the Jewish guards or the Jewish staff were ever caught. Suskind died in Auschwitz. I learned about this after the war. There was very little written about him.

The war for me ended on the fifth of May 1945, five years almost to the day after the Germans invaded Holland. At eight o'clock in the morning, I had heard on the radio, the Germans surrendered in Holland. Everybody went out in the streets, with the Dutch flag, red, white and blue flag and anything that was red, white or blue sown together. The whole city was bathed in red, white and blue – and I walked out free. It was hard to get used to freedom at first. Just to walk there and not have to be afraid that you were going to be taken. The first person I ran into was a cousin of mine who was very close to me. I did not know that he was there. But I wanted to see an Allied soldier because I didn't believe that all this was really the end of the horror. So I got a bike without tires on it and started riding in the direction from which I thought they would come. In the mean time, the new government had made a travel prohibition because they were afraid the collaborators would flee. I was caught outside of Amsterdam, never saw an Allied soldier, and had to stay. I was in one small town caught in an irate mob in the center 'tarring and feathering' some Dutch girls who had gone out with Germans. If I had not gotten out of the way, I would have been trampled to death. They were absolutely outraged. I had to get back to Amsterdam. It took another five days before we saw the first Canadian – the Canadians liberated us. After the German surrender, we rented some rooms with another family not far from where we used to live. The newly liberated part of the Netherlands was in ruins and chaos in every way imaginable. The Government in exile in England returned to the home-country.

My father, now in New York City, had asked some of his younger friends who were serving in the Dutch brigade to find us. And they found us! They brought us food! It was incredible. My father and my aunt then sent each one of us eleven pounds packages of food and clothes every week. Cigarettes were the highest valued trade currency. And we partied – we partied. We didn't know who would be coming back from the East! We did give our name to the agency where people who came back from camps would report so that in case relatives came back, they could find us. And indeed at one time at three in the morning, the bell rang and there at the door was my cousin (the doctor who made the scar) with his wife and two little boys who were not their children, but whose parents had been killed in Bergen-Belsen. You can imagine what that meant to us to see them again. One of my cousins, who was hidden as a two year old child, was saved by Suskind, the Jewish hero who had been able to sneak approx 1000 Jewish children out from under the nose of the guards at the detention center. Her parents died and the doctor, her uncle, and his wife raised her. Her grandmother returned from hiding in the south of Holland. When members of the resistance came to pick her up to reunite her with her grandmother, the woman who hid this little girl, did not trust them and traveled with them and her little charge, now 5 years old, to convince herself that she was safe. My cousin has kept close contact with this woman, her foster mother, until she died last year. For the rest of her life she was still considered a member of the adopting family.

The same professor who had founded the secret Jewish medical school reopened his anatomy laboratory while the university was still closed, and I went back to school. We had to dissect bodies while the electric power was still off and there was no refrigeration. I don't want to go into details, but you can imagine what that was like. I passed my exam in a year that would allow me into clinical medicine. I then was notified by my aunt who had traveled with my father that he had died due to a brain hemorrhage in New York before we ever had a chance to see him again. We had talked to him once on the telephone on the newly repaired transatlantic cable. My brother and I wanted to come to the United States on an emergency visa but there was no place to be had on an airplane. The airplanes were very small and few. As luck would have it, two people had cancelled and we were able to get on an airplane to New York and arrived on a hot June day. In LaGuardia Airport there was no air conditioning at the time and we were wearing our heavy woolen European suits. One never, never, took off their jacket, under any circumstances, till they went to bed. Even at home you didn't take off your jacket. So we sat there sweltering.

My aunt received us in New York and that was the beginning of a new life, first with despair. We didn't know where we would start. I tried to get into medical school, my brother tried to go into the diamond trade. We failed miserably. I wrote to every medical school in the United States and Canada and it was no. All the veterans came out of the service with the GI bill and all colleges and universities were heavily over-subscribed. I remember that we were invited, very shortly after we arrived, to a party for the return of the son from the Army. The son had never left the shores of the United States. There was this big party and it was so foreign to us. Where we came from you never asked how's your husband, how's your father or your mother or wife or children because usually the answer would be we don't know or they died. So to make such a big party about a kid that had never even left the country was to us totally beyond our understanding. But then I remember one night when everything else had gone wrong. My brother couldn't hack it, I couldn't get into medical school, and the three of us were sitting in my father's office where, laughing hysterically out of despair, total despair. My mother hadn't arrived yet. From then on I decided I was going to go to college, but first I was going to take another look at all of the letters from the medical schools. I discovered that Boston University had sent me a letter saying that they had no opening for me, but come and talk to us. After so many negatives, I had only noticed the disappointing part of the response but not the suggestion to come and talk. So belatedly, I flew to Boston. I mean it was crazy because a month had already gone by. They simply sat me down and had me write the National Board Exams in anatomy, physiology etc, in English of course. I did it and they had a little conference and they offered me a place in the first year. I said no. I want to go on to the second year. I thought I had lost so many years and to do pre med over again was impossible. I can't think of it! And they gathered again and came back and said, we'll give you a chance. And I started. At first on my report

card, I was in the lower third of the class, but at least I was in the class. I had a very difficult time in Boston in general including the mourning of my father and close relatives I had lost in Europe, a strange city where I knew no-one, a new language on and on. Boston University Medical School was so different from the University of Amsterdam! It was much more of a vocational school than a school of higher academic learning. I was there alone, didn't know a soul.

I had an immigration visa but if I wanted to stay here permanently, I needed to have an immigration visa! My brother (who was having the same problem) and I had to go to Mexico and re-enter the country with our new visa's. I was already in medical school and I could hardly afford a week away. It turned out that when we arrived in Mexico City the visa-quota for that month had already been reached and we had to wait until the beginning of the next month. In spite of all of these set-backs, I realized that I had survived the war physically and to a considerable degree mentally. Now, whatever shape I was in, I had to confront the other task of surviving after the war, coming to this country making a new life, rebuilding – rebuilding, from nothing!

In 1946, right after the Nazi-occupation ended in Holland, I met my wife three times at parties, yet we had some unspoken understanding that there was more here than an occasional 'getting acquainted! I had to leave suddenly for the US in 1946. We had some written contact but then she announced that she was coming for a visit to New York with her parents. I met her there and after having a chance to pick up where we had to leave off, we got engaged! We needed to get legally married in the US because, otherwise, she wouldn't be able to return to start our married life a year later when I finished medical school. We were married in Boston, she and her parents returned to Holland. They returned a year later and sealed the marriage in a wonderful reception and dinner in New York. Her father had arrived in a very serious medical condition that required immediate intervention! If he had not been in New York receiving a special new treatment for his condition he would not have survived.

We started our married life in New York with me as an intern in an ancient City hospital and after 2 years I was drafted as a physician in the US Army with the rank of 1st Lieutenant (I was not a citizen yet). I spent two years in the US Army during the Korean War, as a doctor and as a psychiatrist. I chose to become a psychiatrist because Boston University Medical School was very avant garde in terms of teaching psychiatry. Our son had been born in New York. I was sent to Missouri in the Ozarks and my wife and son joined me there. Life there was quite a culture shock for us. When my tour of duty was completed, we decided we wanted to live in Boston to complete my psychiatric training and start my practice and clinical affiliations.

After all the horrors I had experienced as a Jew under Nazi occupation, having barely survived, having lost most of my family I was left with an intense personal conflict about my Jewish identity! When my kids began to be aware of things and were early teenagers, I knew I had to talk with them about what had happened. My wife, who had been in a concentration camp, was concerned about this. But I began to explain some of the history to them. When they went on vacation trips to Holland, they stayed with my in-laws and my mother, meeting the family, those that were left. This way we could not avoid them picking up many references made to the history, 1940-1945. This obviously included many references to our Jewish background. It became clear to me that my Jewish identity was a profound part of me, not as a religion but as an identity next to my Dutch identity. This included history, language especially slang expressions, philosophical in terms of importance of family relationships, caring about others, study and most of all humor!

My father had died of a cerebral hemorrhage and I know how much he cared about his family. He might have been afraid to face us because he must have felt that he had failed us while my mother had saved us at enormous personal risks. His death precipitated our hasty departure from Holland to come to the US. He had been a diamond merchant here and tried so hard to move heaven and earth for us to come to the US. As soon as he heard that we had survived, he bought a house in Queens, New York for us to live. For my mother, it was a horrendous loss. I think that she was of the mind that she had saved their two sons, that was her task, and now she was going to get the rewards, in the good sense of the word. Recently I donated money to WBUR, and there is there's a plaque in my mother's honor. The whole family, my brother's family with all his descendents and mine were together for that ceremony. I'd been looking for a proper place for her and finally I found it. My mother passed away in 1976, 15th of March in Belgium. She remarried a few years after coming to the United States and moved back to Belgium where her husband was from and had a business. So we usually visited her in Brussels and they came here. My children got to know their grandmother, 'Oma Stijn', to them.

Of course our experiences had an impact on our children. My wife and her parents and brother having been in Terezin concentration was a very hard experience to grasp! Our son and his wife took 6 months off from his law practice to research and write the history of my wife's family, including their experience in the camp. They traveled to Holland, to Theresienstadt, to have interviews and find all the data he needed. He had to get it, he said, out of his system. Our daughter, when she was about the age my wife was when she was in Theresienstadt, said to her mother: "I know something terrible happened to you during the war. I want you to sit down and tell me everything about it". And she did. It was the first time that she talked to anybody outside of the two of us or with her family. Neither of my children is observant. My daughter married a Catholic who wasn't observant. My son married a Jewish woman who also is not observant. I also would add that for those who think that if you have no religion, you cannot be moral or ethical. Our kids

are very ethical yet there is no religion in their homes. They know they're Jewish or that their mother is of Jewish heritage. My need to emphasize these points is a reaction to the deeply-held conviction in the US that, unless you have a religion and believe in God, you cannot have ethical or moral convictions.

The Little Kettle has assumed a bigger significance than it deserves as a little, junky object! In the background story Alex, my daughter's eldest, was eight years old. We own a house on Martha's Vineyard that we love and the family comes there in the summer and even at other times of the year. That August, my daughter and son-in-law Joe with Alex and Julia came to visit. Alex was a little redhead, a 'jock' with a big heart. Julia was a pretty little girl. One night their parents went out to dinner and we were putting the kids to bed. My wife, Netty, took Julia and read her a little bedtime story from a book. Alex asked for a bedtime story, no book accepted. I told him that I could either tell him about being an intern in New York City in the ambulance and all that or I could tell him about my grandfather. He wanted to hear about New York City so I told him all these macho stories about New York City, delivering babies and car accidents etc. I said: "Okay, now its time to go to sleep". He said that he wanted to hear about my grandfather. Well, he didn't have to ask me twice. So I told him. But until that moment with Alex, I had not put together the story about Opa Mo! In the first part of this story I mentioned that I used to go as a little boy, much younger than he was now, to my grandfather and that I loved him very much and about the kettle. When I celebrated my bar mitzvah Opa Mo brought me the little kettle, now bronzed, with flowers in it.

And then the Germans occupied our peaceful country and they took everything away from all Jewish citizens, everything. I did not want them to get my precious little kettle and I hid the little kettle under the floorboards of my bedroom and nobody ever found it. When the war was over I had survived, I was saved, the kettle was saved, but my grandfather died and that kettle became more precious to me. I wonder sometimes about when I'm not around anymore what is going to happen to that little kettle. Alex asked where it was now and I said it's always been in my office so that I could look at it and remember what it stood for. He asked if he could have it. I said: "Well, I'll have to think about that. My grandfather was very good to me and that kettle reminds me of him. I'm trying to be the best grandfather to you. Opa Mo died but he is still very much with me. Therefore, I can try to be the best grandfather to you. And now I want you to give me a big hug".

When Alex turned 13 years old I packed the little kettle in very nice wrapping paper and put it in a very nice box. I enclosed a personal letter to him in which I described what in my mind the important qualities are in a young man, particularly a Jewish young man. Also that I hoped he would take care of the kettle and when the time comes, give it to one of his children. I picked him up at school. In the car I handed him the package which he opened and proceeded to read my letter to him aloud. We hugged and then Alex said in his inimitable way: "Let's get something to eat". The kettle is in a good place with Alex who will take care of it and what it stands for! We lost a lot of dear ones but in important ways we survived even beyond ourselves with our new families!