More Than a Footnote:

The van der Horsts, Anne Frank, and World War II Resistance

By: Victoria Noriega
Faculty Advisor: Professor Hearst

Introduction

In the summer of 2017, we participated in the UGR Summer Research Program at Pace University in New York City where we prepared a publication titled "The Helpers of the Secret Annex: A Guide for Students." Written to assist students and educators who are reading Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*, the guide offers profiles on each of the helpers who risked their lives to hide Anne Frank and seven others in the Secret Annex during World War II. While researching Miep Gies, we learned that she and her husband, Jan, were also hiding a Dutch college student, Kuno van der Horst, who had refused to swear loyalty to the Nazis. This additional rescue by the Gies family was unknown to the others in the Secret Annex; therefore, there was limited information available about Kuno. For instance, Melissa Müller devotes only a few pages to him in *Anne Frank: The Biography*, and Miep Gies mentions him for a total of two pages in her own 1987 memoir, *Anne Frank Remembered*. Additionally, there is so little information regarding Kuno, we are to believe that there has never been a single photo of him published before. Although the available material was scant, we included most of the information that we could find about him in our Guide.

After the research was published, Kuno's family reached out to us after finding the Guide through the Pace University Digital Commons. This occurrence opened up more information concerning this hidden figure of history. Kuno's wife Hendrika, who was his girlfriend at the time, was involved in being a third-party helper to Anne Frank and those in the Annex. This research project aims to shed more light on how Kuno, Hendrika, and Kuno's mother Catharina survived during World War II, what they did to resist an evil regime, how they helped Anne Frank and seven others, and argues that these individuals deserve more attention than what they have received.

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Most of the information in this paper comes from oral histories in the form of memories and reminiscences by the principals that were transcribed, and that were provided to us by the van der Horst-Kunz family. In the absence of documentation, we should note that oral history, while quite valuable, is often subject to the distortions of time. The Anne Frank House addresses this issue rather well on its website: "Historical reliability of the interviews: No matter how invaluable these eyewitness accounts are, time and later experiences will have influenced people's memories. It is essential to verify the oral history against primary sources and, if necessary, to qualify the stories."

Victoria Noriega '20

Elliot L. Hearst, Faculty Advisor

Pace University

New York, NY

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PART I: Kuno and Hendrika

Kuno van der Horst

Kuno Ludewijk van der Horst was born in Hilversum, Netherlands on Mar. 24, 1920. Kuno was a student hidden by Miep and Jan Gies, two of the helpers of the Secret Annex, during World War II. He attended a technical college and at that time Germans were forcing students to sign declarations of loyalty in order to stay in college. Anyone who refused to sign was punished by being sent to Germany for forced labor. According to Kuno's mother, Catharina van der Horst, she told her son to go into hiding even if he had heard they arrested her (C. van der Horst). Miep and Jan Gies, who were also quite busy helping to hide the family of Anne Frank and four others, began to shelter Kuno in their house during this time as well. Miep had taken Kuno as reciprocation because Kuno's mother, Catharina, was hiding Miep's landlady Mrs. Stoppelman in the van der Horst residence. When Catharina asked Miep to hide Kuno, Miep did not hesitate to accept. In Miep's memoir *Anne Frank Remembered* she states, "Just as Mrs. van der Horst was hiding Mrs. Stoppelman, we felt an obligation to reciprocate and hide her son" (Gies and Gold 149). Miep and Jan never told Otto and Edith Frank they were hiding Kuno, as they realized this knowledge would place them in even more danger, and they did not want to upset them further. Because nobody who was hiding in the Secret Annex knew of Miep and Jan's activities in this regard, there is no mention of Kuno in Anne's Diary.

Kuno worked for an insurance company in Amsterdam, but the occupying German government prohibited the employment of young former students and he was forced to resign. During this time, it was very dangerous for younger people who were in hiding to do fun things such as going to the movies or being with friends. According to Miep, Kuno would spend most of his time home alone in the apartment, where he would often read and play chess. Miep assumed that he would go out to take a stroll from time to time, but she never directly asked him. She wrote, "Always, there was Kuno's small chessboard lying open in the house, in the middle of a game that he was playing with himself. He could take all the time he wanted to think through a move. He had nothing but time" (Gies and Gold 150).

Melissa Müller is one of the few Anne Frank biographers who mentions Kuno, and she notes

Fig. 1 Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

that "he tolerated confinement in his room poorly and had to be called to his senses when he left his hiding place without telling anyone, usually to pursue his passion for horse races. In his case . . . it was not only his own safety that was at stake but that of his helpers and of all the other people dependent on their reliability" (285). In late March 1944, Kuno decided to go to a horse race and that afternoon officers came and arrested him and a few other suspicious-looking individuals, taking them to a German office in The Hague. Everyone was questioned, but Kuno was lucky to be the last one interrogated which gave him time to prepare his statement. He was able to form an alibi by saying he was working for the insurance company. At that point, Miep and Jan decided it would be safer if Kuno returned back to Hilversum rather than stay with them in the event that Nazis came to look for him there. After some weeks when nobody had come to investigate, he returned to Amsterdam to be with Miep and Jan.

After the raid on Otto Frank's Secret Annex on August 4, 1944, which resulted in the arrest and deportation of all of the eight people hiding there, Miep, concerned that she might be under surveillance, thought it would be best if Kuno went back to Hilversum. Once he was back he recounted stories of how the living conditions in Holland had become worse over time, how people would no longer see Jews unless they were hidden in someone's home, and the eerie fact that young men were also no longer out in the streets. Kuno later stated, "I myself lived in our plant in Hilversum to be able to work there without going outside" (K. van der Horst). Since Kuno had prior success with his false identification card, he risked visiting his mother's home for dinner and visiting his girlfriend, Hendrika, at her house.

After the Allies rushed through Belgium, Kuno recalls that their situation became more serious. He called that day "Crazy Tuesday." Once the Allies stormed Belgium, the Germans and Dutch Nazis fled but when they returned, daily life in Holland became much worse. According to Kuno, rationing dropped below living standards and people were forced to buy most of their food on the black market. Kuno later recalled, "Rationing became gradually very bad, just about sufficient to live without working, if you wanted to do some work, you certainly had to buy more food on the black market and that of course is the reason why the black market grew so big and that everybody completely accepted it" (K. van der Horst). Coal supplies stopped completely, which caused the gas and electricity to turn off as well. Manhunts were underway for every man between the ages of 17 and 50 to be sent off to fight. Kuno describes an average day during this period:

> Between 8 o'clock at night and 4 o'clock in the morning nobody was allowed to go outside. Though at exactly 4 we went out in the woods to cut ourselves a tree which has to be in our backyard before it became light. A thin tree was not much worth to burn in the stove; that is why we always tried to get a big one, up to 20 inches in diameter. Coming back at 7 o'clock, often soaking wet of snow or rain, we got a cup of faked coffee and sometimes something that had to be a sandwich. If we still had enough stock of cut wood for the day, we went back to bed. If we didn't, we started to saw for the rest of the morning. At about 12 o'clock we had breakfast, consisting of a big plate with musty rye boiled in water, without sugar or any fat, but a little bit of essence to overcome the musty taste. To cook this meal, we had to make a wood fire in the stove, but that did not yet burn enough to heat the room. Though our first afternoon work was to raise the room temperature high enough to stay in and that took us mostly about 2 hours.

> Another job was to clean the kerosene lamp we were lucky to have. The rest of the afternoon was spent by preparing dinner out of the things the women had managed to bring home during the day. This was, by far, the most difficult part of our life and it had to be left entirely to the women, because it was impossible for the men to go outside in broad daylight. After dinner and the dishes, we sat for a while around the kerosene lamp often playing a game of cards. Reading was not very easy in the dim glow of the lamp. About 9 o'clock we finished one more day by going to bed. (K. van der Horst)

Müller adds the following information to her discussion of Kuno:

> After the liberation of Holland, he moved to the United States, married his young love Henny, and joined his father's business. In 1935, Hendrik van der Horst had developed a chrome plating process that radically increased the durability of motors and other machinery. He was on a business trip in America when the United States entered the war. Returning to Hilversum was no longer an option for him, and he founded the business that still exists today under the name United van der Horst, Ltd. (268)

> In an email to the authors, Kuno's daughter, Marjanne Kunz, relates that "Kuno was a sickly child, had stomach problems and ulcer surgery in his late thirties, and ultimately, his weak heart gave out . . ." (Kunz). Müller adds that "After the war, Kuno van der Horst maintained some contact with Miep Gies, and Otto Frank. He died in Dallas, Texas on May 17, 1968, at the age of forty-eight" (268).

Hendrika Bouedwijn van der Horst

Hendrika Bouedwijn was born in Arnhem in the Netherlands on August 18, 1922. In 1926, when she was four years old the family moved to the town of Baarn. Hendrika graduated from elementary school, went on to finish secondary school and college, and then, like many young people her age, found steady employment. Her job at The Providentia Insurance Company on Heerengracht Street in Amsterdam placed her in close proximity and contact with some important historical figures. Hendrika worked nearby the warehouse which was located at 263 Prinsengracht in Amsterdam. This is possibly one of the most famous and important addresses in World War II history, as this is where Anne Frank hid along with seven others while she composed her memoir that came to be published in the United States as *The Diary of a Young Girl*.

Fig. 2. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

Fig. 3. The Baarnch Lyceum, a secondary school in Baarn, NL that Henridka Boudewijn and Kuno van der Horst both attended. *Courtesy of Dr. Henk van Ommen, Baarnch Lyceum.*

Afgewezen geen.

BAARN, 22 Juni. — Baarnsch Lyceum. Eindex. H. B. S.-diploma A. Geslaagd de dames: H. B. Boudewijn, W. Bronsveld, A. M. Ch. Israël, A. J. Molenkamp, C. J. de Muinck Keizer, L. F. Stierhout, D. W. Tegelberg, C. vor der Hake, H. Vunderink, P. van der Zee; en de heeren: A. D. Bakker, jhr. A. W. van den Brandeler, P. Doornekamp, J. C. van Es, E. H. van Kempen, W. van der Leck, R. R. P. van der Mark, F. van der Meer, G. Roozendaal, J. van Silfhout.

KAMPEN, 22 Juni. — H. B. S. Gemeentelijk

Fig. 4. *De Telegraaf*, 22 June 1940. Newspaper announcement of secondary school graduates. Hendrika's is the first name listed here, as "H.B. Boudewijn," a graduate of the Baarnch Lyceum. *Courtesy of Michael Kunz, Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz, and Dr. Gertjan Broek at the Anne Frank House. Digitized by The Koninklijke Bibliotheek* (*Royal Library).*

In 1999, Hendrika was interviewed about her life and experiences and she shared the story of how she came to know Miep Gies. Miep was one of the small group of people who helped the Frank family and their four friends survive in hiding for two years in the small apartment hidden behind her employer Otto Frank's place of business, that came to be known as the Secret Annex. She sat down with James Warlick in Terrell, Texas where she had lived for a period of time after the war:

> And through . . . well . . . underground channels, and friends of friends, they found out that I was working in Amsterdam, right around the corner from where his office was, and since I lived in a rural area, they introduced me [to] this Miep, and Miep asked me if I sometimes could bring some food that was not rationed to Amsterdam, and bring in . . . because she said, 'I have some nephews who really eat a lot of food, and there just isn't that much.' Needless to say, I had no idea that the food was all for the Frank family, and that's just a small part. So every time that I could get some food in my home town without coupons I would take it to Amsterdam and go to the office, and, um, I don't know how many times I was, at my lunch hour, at the office . . . I never, never, had any inkling that there were all these people there hiding. Never knew about it, until after the war, when I was living here in Terrell, Mr. Frank called me. And he said, 'I am in the States for the filming of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Miep Gies gave me your name, and I just want to personally thank you for what you did.' And I said, 'I didn't do . . . .'
>
> I had forgotten all about it! I didn't do that much. There were, all over Holland, there were people hiding people, and everybody knew that they were at risk, but you did it. (Warlick)

In this same interview, Hendrika discusses the outbreak of hostilities and a topic that comes up often when one looks at this period: the choice between doing nothing, collaborating, or resisting. There are many factors that must be considered when one is faced with a situation that concerns not only one's political sympathies and beliefs, but also the health and welfare of individuals and families. Hendrika recounts listening to an illegal radio, which was one of the most common and simplest forms of resistance that many Jews in hiding engaged in. However, there were other far more dangerous acts of resistance that were being engaged in which she touches on here as well:

> There were Dutch people that were in sympathy with the Nazi movement, and then of course on the 10th of May in 1940 when everybody woke up, sure enough, you had all these planes coming over, that all the German bombers, they bombed the city of Rotterdam, and the Dutch army tried to fight but it only lasted five days, then they were all . . . that was the end of the war. So then, all of a sudden, the country was under the German . . . Nazi rulers, and they appointed a, uh, a commander, in The Hague, and the Dutch government had fled to England, so they wouldn't be caught and be kept in prison. So then little by little, life changed in the Netherlands. First they started saying, well, everybody has to bring a radio to City Hall because everybody was secretly listening to the BBC—the British Broadcasting Company in London—and they were giving messages how to organize underground work, and all different phases of the underground, like how to bring shot down pilots back to England through all kinds of channels, how to hide people, how to antagonize the Germans, so we were not allowed to listen to that. Of course everybody had

> [unintelligible] radio in those days, so what you did, you went to City Hall and you gave your crummy radio and you kept your good one, and you were hiding it in a closet, and you could listen to it anyway. So that's how it started, and then soon after that, there were the steps taken that all the Jewish people outside Amsterdam all had to come into Amsterdam and, um, in a certain part, and they had raids on the Jewish people and they were carried off. Where, nobody knew. Nobody knew really, about the worst concentration camps until after the war, when all this came to light. Every time it got a little bit worse. Then we had to have ID cards. Then checkpoints to have an ID card that was not showing that you were Jewish. Then you had to have rationing coupons. Of course, our life went . . . we had less food, less provisions in the stores, and everybody did as much as we could to help the Jewish people. But personally, I was not, in the beginning, too affected by the changes in the war. (Warlick)

Thus, Hendrika and Kuno van der Horst, who would eventually become man and wife, were both resisting the Nazi regime that was occupying their homeland and they were taking these actions unbeknownst to one another. Resistance during this period in Holland took many forms. There was a worker's strike, which paralyzed the economy for a period of time. Additionally, when the order came down that all Dutch Jews must wear a yellow star similar to the ones that were in use in Germany, many non-Jewish citizens began wearing them as well in a moving show of solidarity that confounded the Nazi attempts at identifying Jews for persecution. There were underground resistance rings and Jan Gies, Miep's husband, was very active in one of these units. Of course, one of the most dangerous forms of resistance, but the most humane of all was the clandestine sheltering of Jews.

"when the order came down that all Dutch Jews must wear a yellow star similar to the ones that were in use in Germany, many non-Jewish citizens began wearing them as well in a moving show of solidarity"

In another account titled "Working in Amsterdam," Hendrika discusses additional activities that she, along with Miep and Jan Gies, engaged in. Hendrika's reminiscence also adds some details concerning her relationship with the Gies family, as well as with her future husband, Kuno van der Horst:

> The husband of Mrs. Van der Horst was in the United States on a business trip when Germany invaded Holland on May 10, 1940 and he was unable to return to Holland. Nobody thought the war would last long, and in the meantime, Hendrik established business contacts in the States and received word through the Red Cross that his family in Holland was all right. His oldest son Hans, who had fought in the Dutch army, had gone to the South of France (unoccupied part) and stayed there during the war. His son Kuno was a university student in Delft when the war broke out and his daughter Rosemarijn was still in high school. (H. van der Horst)

In this account, Hendrika offers some interesting background into the origins of her relationship with Kuno and goes into detail concerning Kuno's time at university and his refusal to sign the loyalty oath. As mentioned before, this refusal was one of many acts of resistance that the Dutch citizenry engaged in. Hendrika recounts that she and Kuno met on Feb. 18, 1939, and that he went on to become "a student at Delft [University]." By this time, many of the anti-Jewish decrees that had infected Germany were becoming enacted in Holland as well, and Jewish faculty members at Dutch schools were being dismissed. Hendrika's reminiscence continues:

> Students and other professors rebelled against this with the result that the Nazi government closed all universities for fear of rebellions. All male students became targets to be picked up for forced labor in Germany in the factories. The German factories were short of men since all men were enlisted in the army. Lots of these Dutch students acquired fake ID cards with a birthdate to make them a few years older (too old to be a university student). Kuno found a temporary job and was living with his mother and sister in Hilversum. (H. van der Horst)

In her later years Miep Gies, now quite famous being the last surviving helper, had her own website, which continues to be maintained after her passing at the age of 100 on Jan. 11, 2010. Her activities with Jan concerning Kuno are mentioned, albeit briefly:

> As the war dragged on, it became increasingly difficult to obtain the daily groceries for the eight hiders and for Jan and Miep as well. Since the spring of 1943, Jan and Miep also had a Dutch student in hiding in their own home on Hunzestraat. This student had refused to sign the German oath of allegiance, imposed on all students. To avoid being arrested and deported to Germany, he had to go into hiding and had found a safe place in Jan and Miep's home. This means that Miep had to go shopping every day for eleven people in total. Less and less was available, so the range of choice diminished accordingly. She felt like a hunter, continually on the prowl for her 'ever-hungry nestlings'. 'But slowly, I was turning into an unrelenting scavenger, and would make do even with scraps. I could not allow myself to get sick. I could not allow myself a holiday.' ("Biography: Helping the Hiders")

"I was turning into an unrelenting scavenger, and would make do even with scraps. I could not allow myself to get sick. I could not allow myself a holiday."

In some biographies of Anne, as well as in Miep's own memoir written with Alison Leslie Gold and titled *Anne Frank Remembered*, mention is made of Miep and Jan's Jewish landlady. These references to a Mrs. Stoppelman are sketchy and merely state that she was also being hidden in another location in Hilversum by Kuno's mother, Catharina. Hendrika refers to this individual as "Mrs. Samson." The use of pseudonyms in Anne's original Diary is just one of the issues that complicate the Anne Frank story. The real names of the helpers were used in more recent subsequent editions of Anne's memoir, as they

became widely known and any possibility of danger had passed. However, some people continued to use the pseudonyms, including Miep, who even late in her life would often use the names Kraler, Koophius, and Elli when she was referring to the other helpers: Victor Kugler, Johannes Kleiman, and Bep Voskuijl, respectively.

Miep's memoir was originally published in 1987, and at that time Miep continued the practice of using pseudonyms for everyone connected to Anne's story, including Mrs. Stoppelman who is referred to as Mrs. Samson in Miep's memoir. In an afterword for a 2009 edition of *Anne Frank Remembered*, Miep explains the pseudonyms and reveals the real names. Referring to later editions of Anne's Diary Miep explains, "Both the definitive and critical editions use real names, so there is no reason for me to maintain secrecy about identities any longer . . . . Our landlady Mrs. Samson's real name is Mrs. Stoppelman" (Gies 255). In her own recollections, Hendrika acknowledges using Miep's memoir as a reference in some of her other reminiscences. In the interest of clarity and continuity, we have reverted the pseudonyms back to the real names where we quote from Hendrika's memoirs in this paper.

Hendrika recounts her involvement with Mrs. Stoppelman's hiding with Catharina van der Horst, her association with Miep, and very importantly, her providing food to Miep. While the food was ostensibly meant for Kuno, Hendrika states that some of this food was also used to sustain the eight people that Miep was hiding in the Secret Annex as well, which would make Hendrika another one of the Franks' helpers, albeit unwittingly:

> Miep and Jan Gies rented rooms from a Jewish lady, Mrs. Stoppelman. Constantly, the Nazis held raids in Amsterdam looking for Jews and many were arrested. It became extremely dangerous for Mrs. Stoppelman to stay in her home and she had to find a hiding place. One day Miep and Jan came home and found Mrs. Stoppelman gone. Mrs. Stoppelman found a 'safe' place through many contacts in the town of Hilversum with Mrs. Hendrik van der Horst. I often visited there on weekends and was informed of Mrs. Stoppelman hiding in their house and met Mrs. Stoppelman. When Mrs. Stoppelman heard that my place of business in Amsterdam was almost around the corner [from] Miep's office, she asked me if I could go to Miep on my lunch hour and ask her for some articles of her clothing from her house. She had left her house with only the bare necessities. I did this and this is how I met Miep Gies. Miep and her husband visited Mrs. Stoppelman several times.
>
> On one of these visits, Mrs. van der Horst asked if she could have a word with them. She told them that Kuno had refused to sign the loyalty oath at the university. The universities had been reopened under the condition that each student who wanted to attend had to sign a loyalty oath not to rebel against the Nazi regime. Thus, Kuno was not safe at home anymore and also had to go in hiding. Miep and Jan immediately said that he could live with them in Amsterdam at the Hunzestraat. This was a rather safe place for him as the address was in a predominantly Jewish section of Amsterdam and the Nazis mostly looked for Jewish people there during their raids. Neither Kuno, his mother, Mrs. Stoppelman, nor I knew that Miep and Jan were hiding the Franks.
>
> Now that I knew Miep and she knew I was working close to her office and that

I lived in a suburban town surrounded by farms, she asked me one day if it would be possible for me to acquire some food without rationing coupons. By that time all food in Holland was rationed. One acquired rationing coupons by going once a month to City Hall and showing your ID card. The Frank family was supposed to have fled Holland and Miep was faced with the fact of obtaining enough rationing cards through underground channels. Any food was very welcome for Miep and she pursued many contacts; a butcher and greengrocer close to the office were on the 'good' side and she knew them well. My father taught a vocational school in the evening to supplement his income. He was an architect by profession but the depression years in the 1930's and later the war made designing houses a meager source of income. During the war he also tutored farm boys and was often paid by them with food from the farm. This was the extra food I often took with me to Amsterdam and delivered at Miep's office. I never knew about all the people hiding there. Kuno stayed with Miep and Jan till the Frank family, the van Pels family, and Mr. Pfeffer were discovered and sent away to concentration camps.

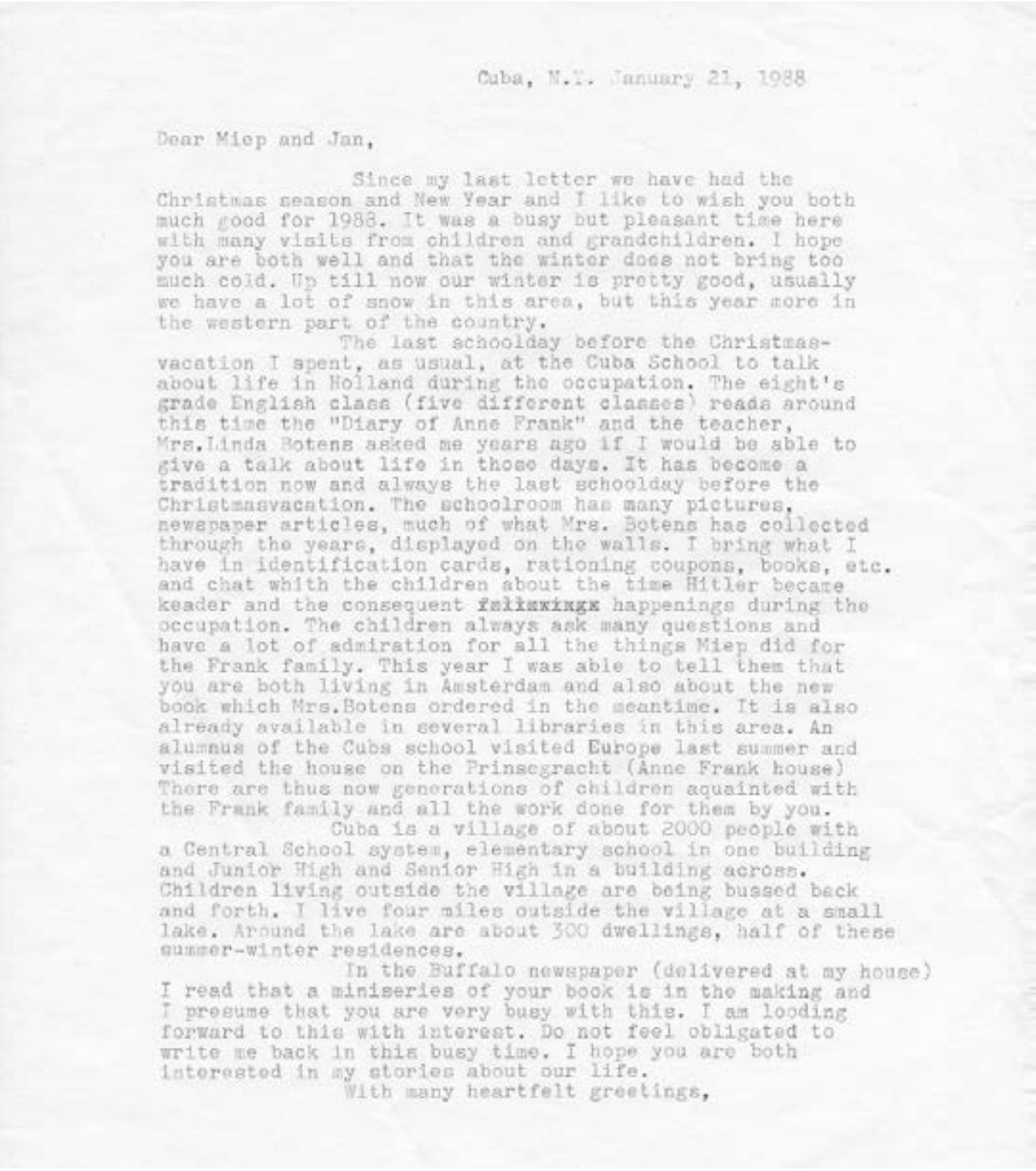
Without telling Kuno more, Miep told him that they were in danger and he had to leave, which he did. The reason Miep gave me for needing food was that she made meals for Kuno and other students. I often visited with Miep, Jan, and Kuno on weekends and Miep always invited me to stay for dinner. With Kuno gone from her house which I knew, she told me that she did not need any more food. This was in August of 1944 and in September 1944 the Dutch railroads went on strike following instructions from the BBC and underground. The trains stopped running until after the war and my commuting to Amsterdam came to an end. (H. van der Horst)

On July 14, 2003, an interview was conducted by Gerlof Langerijs with a relative of Mrs. Stoppelman, Meier Stoppelman, who was born in 1915. A relevant excerpt from this interview, as translated from Dutch by David Cassuto in 2018, reads as follows:

> The hiding of Mrs. Stoppelman with Mrs. van der Horst was not without its problems. She felt very lonely and deserted and so on her initiative, Jan and Miep visited her regularly. She also wrote them from Hilversum. The van der Horsts were members of The Reformed Church. At a certain moment she seemed to want to convert to this Church, why it does not seem to be clear. Mrs. Stoppelman . . . thought that the Reformed faith would make her inviolable. She regularly left the house to walk on the heather, leaving the family in great distress. These changes in character and faith were also the cause of the fact that Jan and Miep could no longer live with her in her house in the Hunzestraat, also because her husband and son had returned. (Langerijs)

Hendrika regularly spoke to students and other groups about her experiences during the war years, with the belief that it was crucial to continue recounting these stories to younger generations. As an individual who was so closely connected to the Anne Frank story, and who contributed to the efforts of the helpers of the Secret Annex, hers is a tale that should be told. Hendrika van der Horst passed away at the age

Kuno and Hendrika eventually married, moved to the United States, and raised a family. Hendrika continued to correspond with Miep and Jan, and she sent this letter to them in 1988:



Cuba, N.Y. January 21, 1988

Dear Miep and Jan,

Since my last letter we have had the Christmas season and New Year and I like to wish you both much good for 1988. It was a busy but pleasant time here with many visits from children and grandchildren. I hope you are both well and that the winter does not bring too much cold. Up till now our winter is pretty good, usually we have a lot of snow in this area, but this year more in the western part of the country.

The last schoolday before the Christmas-vacation I spent, as usual, at the Cuba School to talk about life in Holland during the occupation. The eight's grade English class (five different classes) reads around this time the "Diary of Anne Frank" and the teacher, Mrs.Linda Botens asked me years ago if I would be able to give a talk about life in those days. It has become a tradition now and always the last schoolday before the Christmasvacation. The schoolroom has many pictures, newspaper articles, much of what Mrs. Botens has collected through the years, displayed on the walls. I bring what I have in identification cards, rationing coupons, books, etc. and chat whith the children about the time Hitler became keader and the consequent ~~zelkmxingx~~ happenings during the occupation. The children always ask many questions and have a lot of admiration for all the things Miep did for the Frank family. This year I was able to tell them that you are both living in Amsterdam and also about the new book which Mrs.Botens ordered in the meantime. It is also already available in several libraries in this area. An alumnus of the Cuba school visited Europe last summer and visited the house on the Prinsegracht (Anne Frank house) There are thus now generations of children aquainted with the Frank family and all the work done for them by you.

Cuba is a village of about 2000 people with a Central School system, elementary school in one building and Junior High and Senior High in a building across. Children living outside the village are being bussed back and forth. I live four miles outside the village at a small lake. Around the lake are about 300 dwellings, half of these summer-winter residences.

In the Buffalo newspaper (delivered at my house) I read that a miniseries of your book is in the making and I presume that you are very busy with this. I am looding forward to this with interest. Do not feel obligated to write me back in this busy time. I hope you are both interested in my stories about our life.

With many heartfelt greetings,

Fig. 5. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

of 95 in Cuba, New York on Mar. 3, 2018. She was survived by five children, sixteen grandchildren, and twenty-three great-grandchildren.

From her obituary:

> She was employed at the Providentia Insurance Company in Amsterdam. During her time with this company, she met Miep Gies, Otto Frank's secretary, and regularly used her lunch hour to secretly provide food to be passed along to those in hiding during the Nazi occupation of Holland. Only after the war and the publication of the Anne Frank diary, did Henny realize the food she supplied had helped sustain the Franks and others hidden in the secret annex of Mr. Frank's business. For over 20 years, Henny gave talks at local schools and organizations about World War II and her connections with the Frank family. ("Hendrika Berendina van der Horst")

On the following pages, we reproduced images of two original postcards signed by Miep which she sent to Hendrika's family in 1939, prior to the German occupation of the Netherlands:

Fig. 6. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

Fig. 7. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

PART II: Catharina van der Horst

Fig. 8. Catharina van der Horst in June, 1949. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz

Resistance Activities and Sheltering of the Persecuted

In late fall of 1943, Kuno's mother, Catharina van der Horst, met a woman named Menalda. Menalda worked to bring Jews to safety and find places to hide them during the war. She was looking for a home for a brother and sister with the assumed names of Paul and Beppie—Catharina never knew their real names. These two young people had false papers, but because sheltering Jews was so dangerous nobody wanted to take them in. The siblings were already staying with someone at the time, but the woman hosting them was becoming quite anxious and her husband feared that her paranoia would attract trouble. Catharina, whose husband Hendrik was in the United States running his chromium plating plant, decided that she would take them in. They came over to her house late at night, escorted by their current host. Their current host was disappointed that his family could not continue to hide them, but he recognized that the siblings would be in danger if they stayed at his residence. This was a rather common situation, as those who were in hiding moved around often in an attempt to avoid discovery.

Beppie, who was 19, would teach 11-year-old Paul every day for several hours since Jewish children were banned from all of the schools. She was afraid that if they did survive, he would go back to school and find that he had fallen too far behind in his studies. This was a widespread concern of young people who were in hiding, something Anne Frank writes about repeatedly in her Diary. Beppie also helped around the house by cleaning the dishes after dinner. She would often engage in late-night conversations with Catharina, confiding in her that she refused to take this time for granted, knowing that they could be arrested at any moment. In fact, Beppie's fiancée had been killed already. After a week, the siblings fled to a farm in the eastern part of the country and then moved again to another farm because untrustworthy neighbors had seen Beppie. Fortunately, their mother was in the same part of the country and she was able to see them regularly.

Catharina lost track of Beppie and Paul until the fall of 1944, when a woman named Mrs. De Boer came to see her. Catharina was shocked to learn that the woman she had known previously as Mrs. Kruger had adopted the name of De Boer because of her involvement in the war resistance. Mrs. De Boer was applying for a job as a housekeeper not far from where the van der Horsts lived and needed a recommendation. Catharina learned from Mrs. De Boer that the children were still doing well, but that Menalda had been betrayed by a spy who was pretending to look for a home for a Jewish friend. She was arrested and sent to

prison and then later sent to the concentration camp of Vught. Prisoners there had to perform forced labor, there was never enough food, and severe punishments were often meted out. Menalda was released after nine months and immediately began helping people in distress once more.

Another woman by the name of Betty de Leeuw moved from house to house every four or five days. She was in her twenties, was a leader of a boy's club in her spare time, and before the war had a good position in an office. When all the Jews in Hilversum were forced to go to Amsterdam and live in the ghetto known as the *Jodenbuurt*, Betty began going from one acquaintance to another. Each host would pass her to a new one, until one day she was sent to the van der Horst's by a cousin. Betty stayed with them for a few days, but told Catharina that she would do many different types of work if she could find a permanent place to stay. Catharina ended up taking her to a village eight or nine miles away where her niece, Maja, lived. Maja, who had recently had a baby and needed some help, hit it off with Betty immediately and decided to test out the arrangement. Maja's husband had some qualms about her engaging in such dangerous activities, but once he noticed that everything in the house was proceeding smoothly and that Betty was improving their living conditions, he stopped complaining. However, Betty made a mistake. She spoke with her fiancée's 14-year-old, non-Jewish sister. One day, the sister was questioned about her brother's fiancée's family because none of them had shown up to the ghetto as they were directed to. At first, she denied any knowledge of this, but according to Catharina, the young girl was harshly interrogated until she finally gave in and told them Betty's address.

Two Gestapo officers came to Maja's house to arrest Betty and harass Maja about providing shelter to a Jew. Maja and Betty had made up a story beforehand in preparation for a situation such as this one. Maja had kept a receipt for an advertisement she had placed in a local newspaper as evidence in case they were questioned, which helped the two concoct a story that Betty had presented herself in response to Maja's advertisement for household help. She planned to say it never occurred to her that Betty might be Jewish, so she never looked into it. The two girls were questioned separately and their stories matched up, saving Maja from being arrested. On the other hand, Betty had to pack her things and was taken away. She never came back.

Betty's brother, Paul, changed houses every day, arriving late at night and leaving the next day at the same time. He had stayed with the van der Horsts three or four times and just as many times with their cousin. Paul would do all of the housework that he could, scrubbing the floors, sawing and cleaving wood, and more. He was arrested one night in the street and jailed in the tiny cell of the police office, but managed to escape through a small window in the bathroom. Paul continued with his routine of wandering until he found a hideout in a private forest where he stayed all winter, without fire or any other source of heat. His fiancée would go there once a week to bring him food, which was difficult because she did not possess a supply of ration coupons. Catharina lost track of him, but a few days after the liberation of Holland she saw him in the crowd celebrating. He told her he was the only one of his family who had survived. He said that his father had owned a butcher shop that had been seized by the Nazis, but once he got it back he hoped to get married.

Catharina had another woman hidden in her home for 14 months. Not even her own mother, who would visit them three times a week, knew she lived with them. During the second month that this woman was with them, Catharina met a young Jewish girl, a nurse, who was staying with a friend of her cousin. The girl told her that

her stepmother, who was not Jewish, was an important member in a resistance ring that was providing people with false papers. Catharina was able to get a new identity for the Jewish woman in her house and later one for Kuno, as well. She soon had many customers contacting her for new identity cards and they all received them. The wait would sometimes last for weeks because when one of the links of the chain ended up in German hands, everyone had to go into hiding until they were sure that the Germans had not succeeded in getting useful information out of the prisoner.

Catharina never knew anyone in the ring besides a Mrs. Van de Hoeven, who was providing the false documents, but she knew that the forms for the identity cards that they had were being stolen from stock in Amsterdam. This meant that the cards were official and not merely passable imitations. Catharina later learned that one of the employees who had been signing legal identity cards was also cooperating with the resistance ring and signed around 200,000 cards illegally. While this put him in grave danger, he came through the experience safely. Catharina helped many people obtain a new name and many of them had fingerprints for these cards made by Mrs. Van de Hoeven in the van der Horst's house. They would travel to the house with the cards hidden in their clothing so that if anyone was being detained and forced to undress for a search, the cards would not be easily found. Catharina knew of a priest doing the same sort of work who traveled with a supply of forged cards in his left pocket, and his own in the right. One day he was on a train, and there was a general check being conducted. The priest was asked to show his identity card, and unfortunately—possibly nervous about being questioned—he ended up reaching into the wrong pocket. Catharina recalls that it ended up costing him his life and several other people's lives as well.

The Family Home is Seized and Occupied

Fig. 9. The van der Horst home at Alexanderlaan 22 in Hilversum. While Hendrik was stuck in the United States and unable to return to Holland after the German occupation, Catharina moved to another unknown address on Diependaalselaan. One of those two houses is the one that was seized by the Germans, but exactly which one it was remains a mystery at the time of this writing. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

On Nov. 3, 1943, two uniformed Germans came to the van der Horst's door and demanded to inspect the house. Since Catharina had been hiding a Jewish woman in her home, she told the soldiers to wait in the parlor so that she could finish "getting ready." Instead, she was giving herself enough time to sneak the woman out of her home. Catharina then showed the soldiers around, pointing out several negative qualities about the house in an attempt to deter them from wanting to seize it, but they still seemed quite interested in occupying the property. After inspecting other houses in the neighborhood, the soldiers came back with a decision to use the van der Horst house to shelter officers. Catharina was given just 10 days to move out and she was ordered to leave all the furniture behind, except

the beds, items of old family property, and the crockery. Catharina joked, "Well, suddenly many things were very old and had been in the family for ages" (C. van der Horst). She later found out that having 10 days was extremely generous, since most families were usually given just two or three days to move out. If they complained about having to leave, they would only have a few hours to vacate the premises. She was very unhappy but she knew that crying would not change anything. She recounted thinking that, "these are only your things and as long as there is not one of the family in a concentration camp or going to be executed, you better keep your head up" (C. van der Horst). She knew the Germans loved to see the Dutch people disheartened, and she did not want to give them that satisfaction. They began packing and looking for a new place to live.

The van der Horsts soon found another home with a woman from the Dutch East Indies. The family was very pleased living with her and stayed in the home for 10 months. The woman went on to become one of their long-time good friends. Three weeks after the Germans moved into their house, they called Rose van der Horst over to show them how to use the kitchen stove, since it was not working properly. Rose noticed that all of their carpets and rugs had been replaced so Catharina went to the captain and complained. He found out that the rugs had been moved to another house and he brought the items back. The belongings of the two houses were mixed up so much that Catharina recalls a sergeant going on leave with a nice Persian rug.

They were finally allowed back in their house with all of their belongings just in time to prepare for winter with no heat and light. The van der Horst property had originally been part of an oil heating facility, and there were still supplies there which she had never used since the Germans entered the country. She realized that when she originally left the house, she had covered up an oil tank in the garden with some oil left over from before the war. She had not expected to have any need for it when she covered it up, but she just wanted to prevent the soldiers from getting their hands on as many things as possible. When they uncovered it, they found that the tank had about six inches of oil in it. They were elated to have something to help them through the winter. With the help of their neighbor's oil cans and an old-fashioned pump from the plant they ended up collecting over 100 liters of the now-precious substance. The neighbors, of course, got some of the oil in appreciation for their help.

Rationing and Conscription

Their living conditions grew so difficult that there was no longer any food, and they could not get any in exchange for oil. Moreover, since the eastern and northern parts of the country did not contain highly-populated cities there was a higher availability of food in those regions, and people began to take bicycle trips in search of supplies. Catharina states that on Dec. 12, 1944, Rose and Henny began their first trip. They had two days cycling, two days bargaining, and two days coming back on even heavier bicycles. Their destination was about 90 miles from their home. The girls went to collect wheat, rye, bacon, sausage, eggs, butter, and rabbits. Rose and Henny had begun to go with their neighbor, but he was too afraid of the airplane noises and he dove into the bushes every time he heard a sound in the air, so they left him after three days. Catharina warned the girls to hide the bacon and butter well, as they were valuable and there were rumors that soldiers would confiscate such desirable and scarce items for their own use. For instance, when the neighbor came home first, soldiers stopped him 10 minutes outside of Hilversum and robbed him of his eggs, butter, and bacon, but left him with the rye because it was less valuable. The girls came home the following day with all of their extra supplies tied inside the legs of their ski pants so all the food came

back safely. Although this worked out very well for them, the food was gone rather quickly and the girls had to go back again within two weeks.

The girls continued to travel to buy supplies and return to Hilversum. They went the day after Christmas to buy food for New Year's, but it was becoming more and more difficult to obtain necessities. Rose and Henny had traded more oil and clothes than they did the first time and even then, they were sent away without anything. They did, however, have enough wheat and rye to make bread porridge for two weeks. Catharina also obtained a goose that same week. She states that she had to pay 110 guilders for it, but it improved their meals for a whole week. After their simple but enjoyable New Year's Eve, Henny began to feel sick. She became awfully ill that night, but there was no way to get her medical help due to the evening curfew. Early the next morning, Catharina got a message out to a doctor and he came with the serum for diphtheria, which is a severe infection of the nose and throat. Henny was sent to the hospital the same day. The household lost their best housekeeper while she stayed at the hospital for three weeks, but fortunately, she returned without any complications. Catharina had to bring her back on the rear rack of her bicycle. She describes their January: "I had a very busy time in January without Henny's help as Rose went on a solo food trip. I had to do a terrible lot of washing, disinfecting the bedding Henny had been using, and I was practically without soap. I felt awfully tired and old at the end of January" (C. van der Horst). The impact of merely one of the family members being unable to work affected the entire household in profound ways.

In the winter and spring, the main food they were able to procure with their ration cards was sugar beets. Catharina recalls how difficult it was to make syrup out of them: "Peel them and cut into blocks, cook, drain, and thicken" (C. van der Horst). Since men were the ones that were usually home, they were the ones stuck with the job of the extracting and thickening of the beets. She reminisces about a time on her birthday in February when there were six men talking about how to cook the beets and the process that went into properly preparing them. She jokes that it was interesting to see men engaging in kitchen talk when it was usually the women who were told they did too much of that. After some weeks it was decided to give up thickening and they used the sugary water to cook the rye flour. It saved them a great deal of work and wood and the kitchen was not as damp. The sugar beets that should have been thrown out were kept so they would have something to eat when they could not deal with the pangs of hunger. They made porridge, cookies, and pancakes out of them. Even though no one really enjoyed these dishes, no one would admit it. They all ended up getting dysentery, but it was better than walking around with an empty stomach. Catharina also mentions that they could get a warm meal from the Central Kitchen:

> Each family had to send someone with a pan or a bucket to get it; often we had to wait for hours in line for it. But when you happened to be five minutes too late and they were in time, you did not get a drop. It always was a sort of soup except once a week a hotchpot of beets or sauerkraut. The soup soon got thinner and thinner and finally was cooked of potato peels (the Germans ate the potatoes) with here and there a lost bean or pea swimming around in it. Sometimes you could detect a small eye of greasy nature. The color was bluish and the smell awful. I need not say a thing about the taste. At home we often thickened it with a bit of rye flour, but that could not better the smell or taste. The kitten refused to eat it until it got weak on its legs and finally preferred eating the stuff to dying. (C. van der Horst)

The waiting for oil to be back on their ration cards seemed endless and the delivery continued to be put off. On Jan. 31, 1945 it was finally restored and Catharina went to get in line that morning. The snow was finally thawing, but it was turning into a thick layer of slush, which was still dangerous. She had to wait four hours to have her bottles filled with oil. She described feeling "indescribably cold and wet then but still felt happy having all that oil which we needed so badly" (C. van der Horst). She got home by walking through the snow, as it was much too dangerous to ride her bike and she did not want to lose the oil. She then received the news that her husband's sister was very ill. Determined to see her, Catharina walked because the condition of the roads grew worse every minute. The slush was so deep that the water ran over the edge of her boots many times. When she finally completed her long, arduous journey, she learned the sad news that her sister-in-law had already passed away. With Hendrik in the United States, Catharina was the only close relative able to make funeral arrangements.

Arranging funerals had become a very difficult thing to do at this time, as the undertakers began to run out of materials. She obtained a hard-to-find wooden box, but Catharina says that it could hardly be called a coffin. Not long after this, people were being buried in cardboard boxes with wooden frames and soon after that in Amsterdam bodies were being wrapped up in big sheets of paper and taken to the cemetery, with several of the departed in one carload. Catharina wanted to give her sister-in-law the most decent funeral as possible. She could only invite some cousins living in Hilversum since all of her siblings could not make it because it would take them an entire day to bike there and no one could ride this distance due to the poor road conditions. Catharina did not even have a method of relaying the message to them that their sister had died, since there was no mail or phone service at this late stage of the war.

Catharina recounts that in order to procure food for the funeral it took her a trip of seven hours for just one quart of milk. The weather was getting worse with high winds and people were no longer giving out food since everyone's supplies had run so low. Catharina recalls feeling depressed, tired, and hungry. Times were becoming harder and harder for them; it was becoming difficult to even survive. In February, two additional trips in search of provisions were made. The Germans announced on March 1 that food trips would no longer be allowed because the traffic of hungry people was so dense that the roads were turning black. They decided to close the two bridges over the river Ysel, which made it impossible to reach the eastern or the northern parts of the country. Catharina recounts their last food trip:

> I went together with Henny the last days of February going from farm to farm, trying to get food for clothes and oil but generally we were sent away without anything. We had enough money with us but nobody was interested in money, and we felt like beggars. I changed at last a nice knitted dress of my deceased sister-in-law for a big sack of potatoes. This was, however, a terrible heavy load for our two bicycles. We divided it in four parts and hung it on both sides of the back wheels. A friend of Rose gave us ten pounds of wheat and a miller acquainted with my mother was so kind to give us ten pounds of ground rye for a pre-war price. We managed to get five eggs, in five different farms. This was all we could collect on this trip and we knew it was the last possible one. (C. van der Horst)

Even with eating as little as possible over the next two weeks, the point was coming that there

would be no goods left at all. Then came the news that the Swedish Red Cross had been bargaining with the Germans and were being allowed to send food to the three hungry provinces of Holland without the Germans taking it. The Swedish consul was appointed to oversee the operation, and every two weeks they would receive one whole loaf extra per person and a half-pound of margarine. They would finally have white bread, which had not been seen in five years, and no one had butter or margarine in the last six months. Catharina said that when she first came home with three whole loaves and three packages of butter she was "crying from pure happiness" (C. van der Horst). Some people would eat an entire loaf of bread in one day and would get sick the next, but her family did not overindulge. It felt quite luxurious to have white bread and margarine every two weeks. Due to this slight improvement in the availability of food supplies, people who were on the verge of dying could be saved. When Catharina was on a Swedish ship coming to America she tried to explain to Swedish people what their help had meant to them, but she would still become too emotional to talk about it.

War's End

Later that month on March 24, which was Kuno's birthday, the weather was lovely so the family sat with their doors and windows open. Since the Allies were doing well, the family was in good spirits looking forward to the end of the war coming soon, even holding a small family party that afternoon. Catharina describes the scene: "I had a very tiny bottle of gin and everyone got a very small glass to celebrate the birthday and then came the wonderful news that the Allied armies had crossed the Rhine into Germany. We just had to celebrate that too and pinched the last drops out of the bottle for a second drink, hardly more than a thimble full, but we were happy" (C. van der Horst). This marked the beginning of the end of a horrible time in their lives and for their country. Once the Allies crossed into Germany, the Germans had much to worry about concerning their own troubles and the word spread that it was no longer dangerous for young men to show up in the street. This finally allowed the family to plan Kuno and Henny's wedding. The date was set for April 26. There had been news a few days before the wedding that the war would be stopped for 10 days to allow the Allied planes to drop food parcels in the three famine-struck provinces, but they did not know when that would be. On the day before the wedding the fighting was so close that shooting could be heard all day. Catharina said, "It was like music in one way and on the other side I was very much afraid that it could disturb the wedding party the next day" (C. van der Horst). The town where Henny's parents were living was shelled that night and the Germans were "going in masses in the direction of Amsterdam, full retreat" (C. van der Horst). The entirety of the next day Catharina said she had an uneasy feeling and she realized it was because she could no longer hear the shooting anymore. She worried that the Allied armies had been thrown back again, but it became apparent that it was the first day of the 10-day ceasefire, allowing the Allied forces to give them food. After that the fighting never started again—the war was finally over for them.

At the conclusion of hostilities, Hendrika, like many other Dutch women, created a Victory Skirt, or in Dutch, a *Nationale Feestrok*. According to Jolande Withuis,

> The patchwork pattern was meant to symbolize how society, composed of many very different and loosely connected individuals, could and should become a concordant 'whole'. Just as the little pieces of cloth in the skirt, although completely different in colour, shape, size and structure, together formed a new whole in which the pieces blended

> together - so Dutch society, after the horrendous war, should become a whole that was more than its parts, to which all the components, new and old, bright and ugly, would contribute their share. (295)

Very few of these skirts exist today, and the van der Horst descendants still possess Henny's, which serves as a physical and tactile reminder of this difficult period in world history as well as in their own family members' lives. Whereas many of the memories associated with this skirt are traumatic, its beauty also attests to the sacrifice and heroism that so many individuals engaged in as they struggled against fascism as it invaded and took hold in their homeland.

Fig. 11. The back of Hendrika's Victory Skirt. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

Fig. 10. The front of Hendrika's Victory Skirt. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

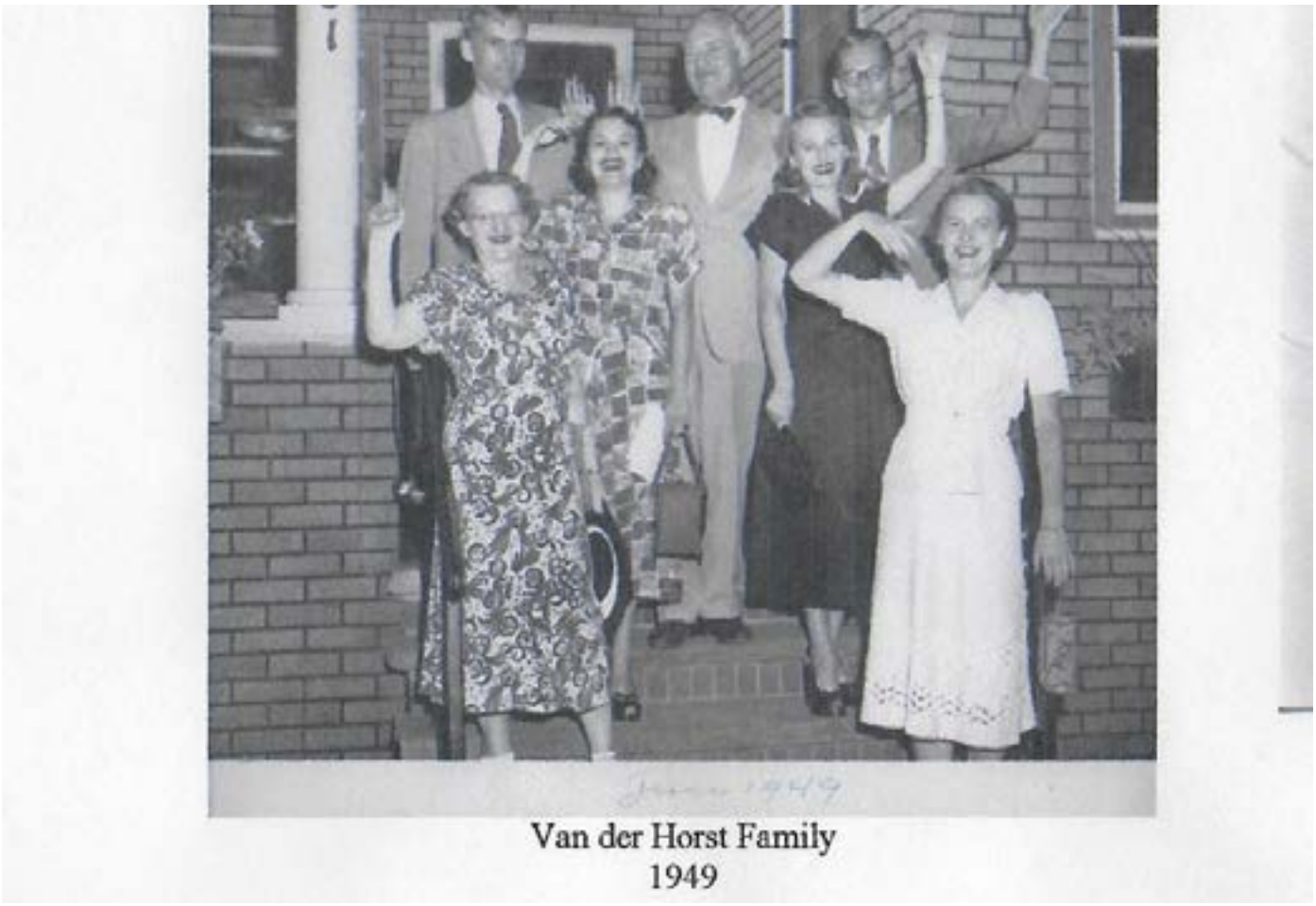


Fig. 12. The van der Horsts residing in the United States after the war. Top (left to right): Hans, Hendrik, Kuno Bottom (left to right): Catharina, Sonja, Rosemarjin (Rose), Henny. Courtesy Marjanne van der Horst-Kunz.

Kuno van der Horst has always been a rather mysterious figure, viewed by many as little more than a footnote to history, and as an individual placed firmly on the periphery of the Anne Frank story. This paper reveals a more fully-rounded portrait of an entire family with deeper connections to Anne, to her helpers Miep and Jan Gies, and as individuals who carried out their own acts of resistance and defiance against an evil regime, which they engaged in at great personal risk to themselves. With the generous cooperation of the van der Horst family we are now able to publish photographs of Kuno, as no images of him had been seen publicly anywhere before. We have also filled in some of the blanks in his story, having been granted access to his written personal post-war memories. In addition, we have also recounted the story of Kuno's wife-to-be at the time, Hendrika, whose family had personal ties to Miep Gies even before the outbreak of the war and the arrival of the Nazis in Holland. Hendrika's accounts of providing food to Miep that was originally meant for Kuno but that also sustained the Frank family while they were in hiding, and of receiving a phone call of gratitude from Otto Frank after the war, may have great historical significance. Finally, the experience of Kuno's mother Catharina, and her own courageous effort in sheltering Jews, is another bright light that shines amidst the darkness of World War II and the Holocaust. The van der Horsts are much more than merely a footnote to the wartime experiences of Anne Frank—theirs is an extraordinary story of courage, resistance, and gestures of humanity as well.

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