

# Memories.

I was born in Amsterdam on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1942 and lived there until 1951 when the family moved to Rotterdam. In 1960 I left Holland for a visit to America. I was 18 years old. During that visit I was impressed in a multitude of ways with the American way of life and American culture in general. Indeed, just like I had been told growing up, America proved to be “the land of milk and honey.” and its people the most generous in the world! That 1960 visit prompted me to immigrate to the United States in 1963 after having served my compulsory army duty in the Dutch Army. Like all “war-babies” growing up in post-war Holland I have a lot of memories of the war. Some are pleasant, most are not.

In the early seventies a Dutch historian and author named Dr. L. DeJong completed his government-sponsored task of putting together the history of “The Kingdom of the Netherlands During The Second World War.” An enormous task that had taken years to complete and resulted in a body of work totaling more than 26 volumes. As the books came off the presses they were devoured by especially the now grown-up “war-babies”. My mother sent me copies as they became available. I had already been away from Dutch culture and all the “war hassles” of my youth for more than ten years and was well established in my newly adopted country. Written in Dutch of course, reading the books evoked many memories and prompted me to call Mam (my mother) in the middle of the night on several occasions as I had just completed a chapter in which I ran across names of people I had known or knew of. In one volume I even ran across a picture of my father! Talk about the memory floodgates opening...

In a lot of ways the years immediately following the war were just as bad as the war itself. Food was scarce and just about everything was distributed by means of a distribution system that would allow people to only buy this specific item, this week, another item next week. Each family was given a certain amount of “stamps” to be pasted on the family’s distribution card. Growing up in post-war Amsterdam I was surrounded by evidence of a terrible time just past. Our neighborhood was on the edge of the Jewish ghetto and in places there were still barbed wire barricades and torn up streets. There were lots of abandoned houses formerly occupied by the Jewish population. The empty houses had been reduced to “shells” and no longer had any doors or windows in them: during the hunger winter of 1944 all the woodwork had been stripped and stolen to be

used for firewood. So there were all these empty houses to play in...

The 1944 winter had been a very cold one, food had been scarce in Amsterdam and by the time the city had been liberated by first the Canadians, then the Americans many people especially children were undernourished and in ill health. My father, a well-known journalist, had witnessed and experienced firsthand the atrocities of war and the Teutonic domination. He related some of his experiences in his book "Winter '44-'45 – a winter never to be forgotten." The little book was translated into English, French and Russian and published in 1945 by my uncle, my father's brother, who owned a publishing company. (While attending college in Ft. Pierce Fla. in 1964, I would find an English copy of that little book in the library of the college.)

I was very, very young when some of the things that befell me happened and by all accounts I should not have remembered things the way I did. As became evident in Holland in the sixties and seventies a lot of "war-babies" had memories they were not supposed to remember and were now "messing up" their adult lives. The "DeJong" books brought out this phenomenon and several studies, in Holland, have indicated that a lot of mental health issues, alcoholism, drug use and general anti-social behavior problems can be directly traced back to suppressed war memories of that block of now adult Dutch "war-babies"... While not suffering from any of the above mentioned ailments the "DeJong" books, in **my** case brought out a multitude of memories that when questioned about them, Mam was able to explain and I was subsequently able to simply place them in my memory banks without any long-lasting ill effects. Some of those memories are "little silly" things that just popped up, some are more serious and caused Mam to tear up and cry. One must remember that while all of this was going on, my mother was in Holland, I was in America and my spoken Dutch was (and today definitely is!) already in the proverbial sewer as English had become my first language. So we decided to save the explanation of more serious memories until she next came to visit and we could be face-to-face.

Some of the "silly" memories include the explanation of "this weird smell" I would sometimes smell in the kitchen in the basement of the old house in Amsterdam. To this day my nostrils still remember this smell and every once in a while I'll find myself in some greasy-spoon joint and smell that particular smell again. I can't stand it! Mam's explanation: The winter of '44 was very bad and food was very scarce, as the Germans had cordoned off the whole of Amsterdam nothing was allowed in or out, including food... Many people succumbed to the cold and lack of nourishment... The population resorted to eating anything that would fill a stomach, including rats, dogs and cats... My father Piet would go to the local park and dig up tulip bulbs that Mam would fry in a last

bit of lard to keep us from crying out of hunger... that smell!

In May of 1945 the Canadians liberated Amsterdam and I vividly remember the festivities. We all went down town to see column after column of trucks and tanks rolling down the street. People were everywhere, in, around and on top of all those army vehicles. The soldiers tossed oranges and chocolate bars that were eagerly devoured by the starving population. Mam caught an orange but I thought it was a ball and wanted to play with it. Until I tasted it! My very first orange. Mam also caught a chocolate bar. I did not know what chocolate was, but as soon as we were home I soon found out what a delicacy it is! To this day I prefer semi-sweet dark chocolate! I'll never forget how my father made a small wineglass out of the silver wrapper with just a few deft movements of his fingers. I can still see it sitting on the mantel.

The liberation of Amsterdam brought some strange changes: Swedish white bread came falling from the sky (air drops!) and bottles of milk appeared on the doorstep. The liberators set up a food distribution system that was geared to nourish and strengthen the adult population, paying particular attention to the many malnourished children. Many of those children were in very bad shape; including my older sister Petra who suffered from "something" All I knew was that she spent a lot of time in the bathroom. At that point in time our family consisted Mom & Dad and four children, my youngest sister had yet to be born. Social Services sent nurses to every household to check out the medical needs of all the children. The Canadians supplied cod liver oil and the nurses would give each family a month's supply. Our family received two liter bottles of the stuff; each night, just before we went to bed we'd line up in the kitchen and Mam would give us our allotted amount. This child would get one teaspoon, that child two. My mouth would receive **two** tablespoons. Pure cod liver oil... I came to **love** the stuff! This much about the cod liver oil I remember. Here in the early eighties on one of her visits Mam would fill in a few more details: I was three and a half years old and quite the enterprising little boy. The two liter bottles were stored in the upper kitchen cabinet. The upper kitchen cabinet had glass doors and the two bottles of liquid gold could be seen clearly. The two liter bottles represented a month's supply for the Donker kids. I had grown to **love** the stuff so one night after everyone had gone to bed I snuck out of bed, climbed on the kitchen counter so I could reach the bottles and before I was caught drank one whole bottle of pure cod liver oil! When my mother went to social services to request refills, she had a hard time explaining to the nurse why the previous month's supply had dwindled so fast. She did get the refills and I suffered no ill effects of my nocturnal adventure. Milk had been in short supply during the winter of 1944 and as a result most people, especially children were found to suffer from calcium deficiency once examined. Our family was

no exception so the same nurses that brought the cod liver oil also delivered small pointed paper bags with pure calcium. Each child had his/her own little bag with “orders” to make the stuff disappear within an allotted time. We were to spread the calcium on our food, pour it in a glass of milk and generally ingest it however we wanted. Swedish white bread sandwiches with butter and calcium are awesome! Once our little bag was empty, we’d receive another. I can still feel the dry powdered calcium stick to the roof of my mouth!

While submerged in the DeJong books one of the strangest memories came to the forefront. It prompted me to call my mother in Holland. All she would tell me over the phone that I was not supposed to remember things like that... Crying she promised to explain my memory when next she came to visit. The memory in question was rather simple: It was a bright sunny day. Suddenly there was lots of noise and it became very dark. Through a slit I saw shiny things dancing on the pavement and more noise. Then things cleared up and it was sunny again... Fortunately the next visit was only a few weeks away.

All through the war the Germans conducted “razzias”. In the summer of 1942 the Germans conducted one of many “razzias” in our neighborhood. They would race through the streets firing their weapons at the second and third story windows of the houses thus forcing the scared inhabitants to run into the streets. Young men and boys were then rounded up and hauled off. Most would never return. Mam was out for a walk with baby Rogier in the pram. Trucks came around the corner, shots were fired and Mam did the only thing she could think of and turned the pram with me in it upside down, then covered it with her body. The noise I heard were the German panzer wagons racing through the street and the gunfire, the shiny things I saw through the space between sidewalk and the upside down pram were pieces of glass that came raining down on the sidewalk as windows were shot out. I was only three months old...



Sometime during 1942-44 we had a regular visitor in the person of Betty Coronel. The picture above was taken in June of 1942. My sister Petra on the left, Betty on the right. Betty was Petra's playmate, but both my sister and Betty would pay attention to me as I lay in the pram or in my playpen. I can still see her scarf and black hair – lots of it! That is all I remember of Betty. After the war the above picture was floating around the house. Over the years I learned, via bits and pieces of information, that during the war, Betty (a Jewish girl) had passed as our older sister. When, many years later I would question Mam about the girl in the picture Mam would always clam up and I grew up believing that Betty did not survive the war. When a few years before Mam's death I asked her if I could have that picture of Betty and Petra she indicated in no uncertain terms that she wanted to keep it a while longer as it was the only picture of Betty.

*“Er is maar een picture van Betty en die will ik voorlopig zelf houden.”*

*“There's only one picture of Betty and for now I would like to keep it for my self.”*

By Mam's tone I knew not to pursue the matter so I dropped the subject. A few months after Mam's passing in 1992, my sister Petra sent me some papers and a sealed envelope with my name on it in my mother's handwriting. When I opened the envelope there was the picture of Betty and Petra. I questioned Petra about Betty, but she hardly remembered her playmate and indicated surprise that Mam had hung on to the picture at all.

After I suffered that widow maker in October 2013 I was forced to slow down and spend a lot of time resting in front of my trusty Mac. My sister Petra succumbed to cancer in 2006 so now I'm on my own to find out an explanation as to why my mother never went into detail about Betty and why she always would clam up when the subject was broached. Having time on my hands and having a high-speed Internet connection I recently set out to find out whatever I could about “my” Betty.

## The Coronel story.

When I first punched “Betty Coronel” in the Google search engine, a bunch” of Betty’s jumped at me. All of them looked too young to be “my” Betty so I narrowed my search and included the key word “Jewish” & “Amsterdam” : The Google floodgates opened and I ran across a lot of Dutch web sites dealing with the Jewish community of Holland and particularly Amsterdam, the city of my birth. On this website ><http://www.communityjoodsmonument.nl/person/186034/en>< I found the following information about Betty’s family:

*...Mozes Coronel was the son of Abraham Coronel and Sara Rachel Ferro. He married Johanna Blommekoper. The couple had two children: Hanna and one child that survived the war. In February 1941 his wife died. Mozes Coronel was hospitalized at the Apeldoornse Bos to recover from a nervous break down. He was deported from this institution...*



Mozes Coronel  
Amsterdam, 7 September 1877  
Auschwitz, 25 January 1943  
Betty’s maternal grandfather.

## Betty's parents.



Hanna Mullem-Coronel  
Watergraafsmeer, 19 December 1913  
Neustad, 3 May 1945



Nathan Mullem  
Amsterdam, 16 June 1911  
Monowitz, 20 December 1943

## RIP

Various Google searches resulted in bits and pieces of information. One web site indicated that “one child survived the war”, but no names were given. On another I learned that “After the war the child moved in with an uncle...”. Again no names were supplied although it was evident the respective sites were talking about the Coronel family. Another Google search landed me on the “Righteous Among The Nations” web site where I found the rescue story of one Betty Coronel. The story mentioned Betty’s parents by name and it became clear that Betty survived the war and had indeed moved in with an uncle.

So now I came to realize that Betty Coronel had survived the war but the reason my mother would always clam up when I questioned her about Betty or the photograph still eludes me. More Google searches resulted in finding definitive proof that Betty survived the war. When I punched in the keyword “Coronel”, more than twenty pages came up. After glancing over each page I stumbled upon an unusual name on page 13: “Uri Coronel” Living in Holland, he is apparently a rather well known person. Owner of a very large insurance company that his father started, he also served as President of the Dutch “Ajax” Soccer Team. A quick check in “Wikipedia” told me more about this Uri and another Google search landed me on the web site of a Jewish on-line magazine, called JMW Benjamin 71 which contained a lengthy interview with Mr. Coronel. The April 2008 interview starts off as follows:

*...24 december 1946, Maurice Uriël Coronel wordt geboren in een Joods gezin in Amsterdam. Een gezin van 7 kinderen die 8 ouders hebben. Uri's vader keerde terug uit de Shoa met het dochtertje van zijn zuster. Zijn moeder met haar eigen dochter...*



Uri Coronel, 2008

### Translation:

*On December 24<sup>th</sup> 1946, Maurice Uriel Coronel is born in a Jewish family in Amsterdam. A family of 7 children who have 8 parents. Uri's father returned from the Shoa (The Holocaust) with the little daughter of his sister. His mother with her own daughter...*

The translation seems to be indisputable proof that Betty Coronel was alive and well while I was questioning my mother about her very existence...



As happened often after the war surviving family members would readily accept surviving children of deceased members of the Jewish community. It appears that Betty grew up as an older sister to Uri, when in fact she was his cousin. Further searches let me to a publishing company that published "Uri. My familie, mijn leven", a biography written by Uri Coronel in which he details growing up after the war, his family and life in general, including a 2011 trip to several former concentration camps to commemorate his murdered ancestors. An excerpt from his book offers further proof that the Betty of my youth was alive and well and growing up in postwar Amsterdam at the same time I was.

*Uri groeit op in het naoorlogse Amsterdam met zijn half-zusje, nichtje en neef. Het 3-jarige dochtertje van zijn moeder uit een eerder huwelijk en **een nichtje van zijn vader***



*Uri grew up in postwar Amsterdam with his half-sister and two cousins and the three-year-old daughter of his mother from a previous marriage as well as **a niece of his father...***

The “niece” referred to above being Betty!

The book was published in April of 2014 so I have every reason to believe that Uri is still alive. It is quite possible that his cousin Betty is also still alive. She would now be 75-77 years old. I sent the following E-mail to a few Dutch webmasters hoping that one of them would respond.

*Dear people,*

*I'm 72 years old, have lived in the US since I was 18 and am now searching my Dutch past. During the war I had a playmate named Betty Coronel. Growing up in Holland after the war there was a picture of Betty and my older sister Petra floating around the house. When I became older I would ask about the picture but Mom and Dad always clammed up when the subject came up. I grew up thinking that Betty did not survive the Holocaust. Upon my mother's death in 1992, my older sister sent me some stuff from my Mom's estate. Among the papers I found the picture of Betty... but still no explanation as to who she was or what really happened to her. In 2005 my sister Petra succumbed to cancer before I could ask her about Betty. Here we are, a lifetime later and I have been searching on the Internet looking for Betty. I learned that she did survive the war and that she grew up with Uri Coronel. Now I am so hoping that she is still alive. Would it be possible to put me in contact with Uri so that I can finalize my thoughts about my wartime playmate?*

*Hoping!*

*Rogier Donker*

*See us on the web at <http://www.donkerstudio.org>*

## The aftermath.

...And one of them did! Days after I sent off the preceding E-mail I received a response from the publisher of Uri's book, A mr. Hans van Maar: "Thanks very much for your mail. I will forward this to mr. Uri Coronel." Hans also sent me the URL of the web site where I could order Uri's book. I did so immediately and I am now sitting on pins and needles hoping to hear from Mr. Coronel himself. Amazing this modern technology!

In the meantime I have learned some more details by re-examining some of the previously visited web sites. On the web site "The Righteous Among Nations." I found an earlier overlooked bit of information on the page that details Betty's survival of the war. Right there in the first few sentences: ... "Through their former neighbor, who was active in the underground, the Mullems were put in contact..." That former neighbor must have been my father Piet! If the information about Betty's age is correct, something does not add up as the picture I have of Petra and Betty shows a two or three year old Petra and an older Betty... Maybe the picture was taken **after** the war? That makes no sense either since Petra was two or three in 1942-43 as she was born in November 1939. In the picture Betty looks to be four or five... The picture of the two of them, as written on the back, was taken in June 1942... Sister Petra was just over two-and-a-half years old and I was four months old. And yet I remember! The mystery deepens... Were there possibly **two** Betty's? The "Betty" that Hanna Mullem-Coronel and her husband Nathan Mullem were seeking a hiding place for was one year old in 1943. The Betty in my picture of 1942 is obviously much older...

Pure speculation on my part: The information that goes with the picture of Mozes Coronel states that: *The couple had two children: Hanna and one child that survived the war.* Hanna did not survive the war but her daughter, Betty Mullem did. She was the Betty that Abraham Coronel the "*one child (of Moses) that survived the war*", Betty's uncle, took in after the war. Uri grew up with an older half sister. It would make sense therefore that **my** Betty Coronel (last name Coronel- not Mullem!) was the daughter of Abraham Coronel who was in hiding during the war. No information was found about a possible wife or daughter of Abraham Coronel, but the above scenario is quite plausible.

Days after the above I received an E-mail from Mr. Uri Coronel in Holland and it became very obvious that my Betty was not the same person as his Betty. Mr. Coronel was responsive to my inquiry and intrigued by my quest.

*Dear Mr. Donker,*

*What a remarkable e-mail I received from the publisher of my book!*

*I indeed have a sister Betty and although she has called herself Coronel in her pre-married life, that is not her official name, nor the name she was given while hiding during the war.*

*But first the good news. Betty is alive and kicking, 72 years old, living in Amsterdam with her husband Jaap Sajet. She has 3 children and 8 grandchildren and I see her practically every week. Life has treated her well. They lead a happy and prosperous life.*

*Now the other side of the story. I obviously forwarded your mail to her and her first reaction is, that she will probably not be the person you are looking for. Betty's mother Hannah Coronel was my late father's sister and married to Nathan Mullem. Both Nathan and Hans (as she was called) were killed during the holocaust. Betty Mullem was hidden with a family Bakker in the north of Amsterdam and was called Betty Bakker during the war. She stayed there until mid 1946 when my father, after his marriage, took her in his home and raised her as his daughter. Only from that period onwards she was called Betty Coronel. I was born in December 1946 and we had one more brother and sister. Until mid 1948, we lived on the Stadionkade number 81 in Amsterdam and moved to de Gerrit van der Veenstraat number 161 in the summer of 1948. Betty has no memory of playing with your sister or yourself during the war and is reluctant to be confronted with hidden emotions. Furthermore, nobody could have linked her to the Coronel family name during those years. However I think it is fair for me to send you a picture of Betty in the late 1940's so that you can compare this to the picture you have. Betty is the girl on the left. The other persons are our late sister Ell, my father and myself. If we are talking about the same Betty, please let me know and I will talk to her. Just one other remark. There is also a HENNY CORONEL of about the same age. Her name was always Coronel so maybe she is the person you are looking for.*

*If you need some further help, please let me know.*

*Kind regards,*

*Uri Coronel*

In my zeal to uncover the story of Petra's wartime playmate the above is indisputable proof that I pursued the wrong Betty Coronel and in doing so might have opened some old wounds for which I am very sorry. I sent Mr. Coronel all of the information I have accumulated so far and am now awaiting his response. It appears, however that my search has reached a dead end... A few days later I received another E-mail from Mr. Coronel:

*Dear Mr. Donker,*

*Thank you for your mail and I have read the material with interest. Everything you write is correct, but you are looking for another Betty. That is amazing because yesterday I looked again at the website of joodsmonument.nl. I am sure that you found everything there. There are almost 100 Coronels on file, but no Betty. There is one*

*Rebecca ( 10 years old when she was murdered in Sobibor) and maybe they called her Betty, but that is a long shot. This site has proven to be correct in most cases so that I assume that your Betty survived the war. It is unlikely however that she returned to Amsterdam. We would have known. There were not many Coronels who survived and a Betty would not have remained a secret.*

*Other possibilities?*

*It might be that she was hidden and stayed with that family and was given their name, growing up without realising that she was a Jewish kid. This happened quite a lot and sometimes there were bitter fights between Jewish organisations and foster parents about the fate of a child.*

*Maybe that was your mother's secret.*

*If she survived as a Jewish girl she might have immigrated (to Israel?). What you can do is look at the website of Yas Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust centre. They have a very extensive database.*

*There are 2 more things I can think of.*

*There is a Dutch journalist called Guus Luiters who wrote a book about children killed during the holocaust. We have a mutual friend and I will ask him to look whether he has anything on record.*

*The last thing I can do for you is to ask the Spanish Portuguese Jewish Congregation in Amsterdam. The Coronels all belonged to that community. Both my father and my brother served as president and I will send out an inquiry.*

*If that doesn't work I am afraid that an answer is practically impossible to find.*

*I will let you know the outcome of the two things I will investigate.*

*Kind regards,*

*Uri Coronel*

*Dear Mr. Coronel,*

*Once again I have to thank you from the bottom of my heart for taking the time to help me solve "my Betty problem." The way in which you phrased your latest answer sparked some more thoughts on my part. My war memories that I committed to paper are all true and factual as my mother later substantiated them. There are, however, a few more memories that I cannot substantiate and therefore did not include in my story. My father always said to stick to the facts! :-)*

*I have this one vague memory: a room full of people, my Mom, my Dad and all of us kids including Betty. A lot of yelling and screaming. End of memory. Every time I would ask Mam about that one, she'd clam up. That memory does not and has not in any way influenced my life, but it is there none-the-less. Since you are much closer connected to the whole hassle may be you can help me with it.*

*Pure speculation on my part: Could it be that my parents were the ones who harbored Betty and had to give her up because somebody squealed? That, in my mind, would have been one heck of a secret to carry around and account for Mam's sad and hurt face every time the kid (me) opened his mouth about the subject?*

*Mind you I am not in any way losing any sleep over all this but it would be nice to be able to put it to rest.*

*Meanwhile I have a bunch of very fond memories of growing up in Amsterdam. When I was born we lived on the corner of the Amstel and the Groenburgwal (#73), later when that area became part of the Jewish ghetto, Mom & Dad were forced to move to the Spinozastraat # 7, which during the war was called Andriesstraat. I grew up with lots of Jewish friends and a lot of my parents' friends were Jewish. The "Waterlooplein" and the area around the Moses and Aaron synagogue was our playground. Well-known illustrator Jo Spier was a family friend as was Simon Carmiggelt and the photographer Cas Oorthuis. Mr. van Doveren, having something to do with Circus Carre, allowed us to come in any old time and visit the animals and talk to the clowns. Abraham the "haringboer" - we'd save newspapers that he'd take in trade for a pickle or even a whole herring! :-) Wonderful childhood memories!*

*Becoming an adult here and being too far removed from Holland, I was not aware that "Coronel" was/is such a well-known name in Amsterdam and I sure appreciate your offer to do some more checking!*

*Most respectfully yours,*

Over the next couple of weeks E-mails went back and forth between Uri Coronel and myself. It had become very clear at this point in time that "my Betty" had been located, but she was not "mine". Uri alluded to a "Rebecca Coronel" so I got to thinking:

*Dear Mr. Coronel,*

*I am presently recovering from a case of acute bronchitis, getting better, but as you can imagine, I have a lot of time on my hands... Please if you will, humor me. In one of your E-mails you wrote"*

*...There is one Rebecca (10 years old) when she was murdered in Sobibor) and maybe they called her Betty, but that is a long shot...*

*When I made a close-up of my 1942 picture of Betty and look a bit closer... She might be older here than I previously thought. Seven or eight perhaps. The Rebecca you mentioned was murdered at ten years old. Do you have any information about her? She could be my Betty!*

*Again, thank you so much for your involvement in this matter. I look forward to your next E-mail!*

*Respectfully,*

And before he could answer the above I found my Betty and fired off the next E-mail to Mr. Coronel:

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*Jubilant!*

*Thanks to you, I found my "Betty"! Not a doubtful hair on my head! :-) I shouldn't be this jubilant, given the subject matter, but it sure makes me feel good that I can finally put things to rest. In my previous E-mail to you I quoted your line about Rebecca Coronel. Well... I went back to the joodsmonument.nl web site and this time punched in: "Rebecca Coronel"... POW Right there! Bingo-boom! The website shows a partial map of Amsterdam and highlights the 1942 address of the person. Rebecca Coronel and family lived on the Staalstraat 19 which is right around the corner of the Groenburgwal 73 where I lived! Now my memory is coming back in even more detail: Rebecca was Petra's playmate from around the corner. They'd play in the sand of the street where the bricks were all torn up. I'm in the playpen next to them. Yes!!! There is a picture in my baby book that shows a lady leaning out of a second story window, waving. The caption just reads (in my mother's handwriting) "our neighbor watching the kids." I bet that was Rebecca's Mom. I venture to say that my sister Petra, then three could not say Rebecca's full name and called her "Betty" for short! It is no wonder that my Mom clammed up - my picture was taken in June of 1942 - According to the website ten year-old Rebecca and family were murdered a month later in Auschwitz....*

*Phew!!*

*Thanks for being in my life and please forward my apologies to your sister for opening up old wounds. I did not mean to!*

*Fantastic, also because in the meantime I also learned that Rebecca Coronel indeed lived in the Staalstraat. I even have a picture from 1932 (attached) although I am not 100% sure it's the same girl. But two Rebecca's in that age category seem unlikely. No problem with my sister, it did not hurt her at all.*

*I am glad I could help.*

*Best regards,*

*Uri*

*ps: The photo is from the book by Guus Luiters of deported children.*

*Yes indeed! Birthdays are the same, your attached picture, to me, looks like a young Betty. Yep! End of search! Wow!*

*So, it appears I may very well have the last picture of Rebecca Coronel taken on this earth. Do you know of any survivors that might like a copy?*

*Meanwhile my head stopped spinning about early wartime memories. Betty's was the last pre-1943 memory I could not ever understand or collaborate. Now I have closure.*

*Thanks again for all your help!*

*Rogier*



Rebecca Coronel  
Amsterdam 9 June 1932



"Betty" Coronel  
June 1942

Auschwitz July 1942

So **that** was the connection between my parents and Petra's playmate! Mam's clamming up when questioned is now quite understandable since the whole story has come to light. It was just too painful a subject to share. Whether or not my parents had anything to do with Betty's family's demise I will never know and at this point in time the details are moot. One more E-mail from Uri:

*Please feel free to share this story with anybody you want. Keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive is one of my missions in life. You will probably find out more when you read my book.*

*Again it was a pleasure helping you.*

*Uri Coronel*

The one thing that did come out of all of this is that the last of my pre-1943 memories are hereby laid to rest!

On the banks of the Wabash, October 2014