

**NARRATOR: Butler, Tessa**  
**INTERVIEWER: Troy Reeves**  
**DATE: March 12, 2004**  
**LOCATION: Pocatello, Idaho**  
**PROJECT: Women in WWII/Veterans History Project**

[Note: The start of the analog cassette copy holds the remaining few minutes of the first interview with Butler.]

<b>No. of Minutes</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Summary</b>
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**START OF RECORDING**

00:00	30	Introduction
00:30	30	Butler began by telling stories about her WWII experiences that she recalled after the first interview. (The first interview was held the day before, March 11, 2004.) Butler talked about walking the family goat to green grass and almost pounding the goat's stake into a landmine, witnessing a grenade destroy the wall of the house that included a wall of her bedroom, dealing with the "Hunger Winter" of 1944-1945, eating the cake dropped from airplanes from the Red Cross, trying to save a Canadian pilot that parachuted into the village, gathering parachutes (from a mine field) that the Allies had dropped into the area, recalling the Market Garden operation, rationing of goods, and noting that other people, beside the two Jewish girls, living with them.
10:00	32	Butler clarified from the first interview that the young men that the villagers harbored were members of the Dutch Resistance. Butler recalled the sound that the Allied airplanes flying overhead at night frightened her more than anything else. Butler noted that there were no lights, so the night was completely dark. Butler and the interviewer then looked at her family's guestbook that they kept before, during, and after the War. Many artists stayed with them, so the guest book does contain poems, drawings, paintings, letters, words of remembrance, and photos. [Most of the photos that the interviewer took of the contents of the book did not turn out visible.] Butler discussed all of the items that the Germans usurped from the villagers; some of the items were later found, and some never turned up again. Butler continued to discuss the photos in the book and gave the name of her best friend (Cornelia Laakso) in the village. She has lived in Oregon for nearly fifty years. She talked about an adage in Holland. When something tasted good, it was "like the angels peeing on your tongue."

No. of Minutes	Page No.	Summary
18:45	35	They continued to look at the guest book, including talking about a thank you in the book from a young man that they harbored. She talked about the two Jewish girls (Dieneke and Lonnie) that they housed during the War. <b>[Note: Starting at this point, there is distortion off and on in the interview due to a dirty DAT deck.]</b> With prompting from the interviewer, Butler talked about how the youngsters continued to do their studies at home during the War. Butler's parents and other adults wanted to keep the children busy. Most of the guest book was written in French or Dutch or German, so her children will not be able to read it.
23:00	41	Butler then brought out a road map of Europe, focusing on the Netherlands. She and the interviewer looked at the map to show where Nederhemert, other villages, and the Maas River are located. She also noted the geography that made "The Island" so. Butler noted that the Allied took over south of the Maas River, but their village was north of the Maas, meaning the Germans held the area until May 1945. She offered an overview of how she and her husband ended up in Pocatello and how many times she returned to Holland. <b>[Note: At 27:45 the public listening copy (analog cassette) shifts from side one to side two.]</b> She recalled one specific trip in 1962. Her father died, and she was pregnant. So, she stayed in Holland until her child was born. Her older child stayed in Holland with them and spoke only Dutch by the time they all returned to the US. She also mentioned going to Europe in the summer of 1945; her wartime sister, Lonnie, paid for it. She liked going back, but she always felt like a stranger in her own country.
31:45	44	With prompting from the interviewer, Butler talked about her initial impressions of Pocatello, including the trains and the Navy men that worked at the INEL. She also liked the fact the sun has always shined in Pocatello. She said that where home is depending on you. Butler talked about being involved in the faculty women's club at Idaho State University and being against growth in Pocatello (because they did not want other people to move into the town and state). She offered her opinions about anti-tax movement, including one specific example in Pocatello. The interviewer and Butler discussed the road problems and the political change in Pocatello. She noted the feeling of "social responsibility" has left the city.
41:15	49	Butler showed the interviewer the family's Yad Vashem medal, given to them by the country of Israel. She concluded by saying that she felt a part of Pocatello and by stating her father's "motto," which was to keep trying (pushing) until you finished the job.
45:45	51	<b>END OF INTERVIEW</b>

**NAMES AND PLACES INDEX**

Butler, Robert  
Idaho State College (Pocatello, now ISU)  
Laakso, Cornelia (Butler's best friend in Nederhemert)  
Maas River (Netherlands)  
Nederhemert, Netherlands  
Pocatello, Idaho  
Vitjens, Nettie (Butler's mother)  
Vitjens, Willem (Butler's father)  
Vlymen (Vlijmen), Netherlands  
Yad Vashem medal (given to Butler family by Israel)