

## Kleine Stokstraat 1

### Family Os

#### The Tragic History of the Kleine Stokstraat, Number 1

On October 16, 1912, Salomon Os from Venlo marries the Maastricht woman Johanna André. Salomon works as a yardman, and his newfound wife is a maid, who already has a son named Mauritz. Together, Salomon and Johanna have four children: Bernard, Michael, Simon and Mary, who goes by the name of Mieneke. Their second son Michael dies at age two and in 1930 Johanna André becomes a widow. After Mauritz gets married and Bernard moves to Rotterdam, the Johanna and the remaining Os children move to a spacious house on the Kleine Stokstraat 1, where they live together with Johanna's sisters Bertha and Celine and her cousin Leneke (Celine's daughter).



#### A Letter from Camp Westerbork

Like so many others, also this Jewish family does not escape the war. On August 21, 1942, Bernard, who has been deported to work in Westerbork, writes a letter to his aunt Celine and his cousin Leneke, describing his life in the camp: "Yes, I find it to be very difficult to be

separated from my wife and child, but we'll have to be strong either way," he concludes. In his letter he encloses a wedding picture from labour camp Linde in Zuidwolde, and he asks his aunt to send his regards to his mother Johanna. It remains questionable if Celine and Leneke were ever able to pass on the message as several days after writing, Johanna Bertha, Simon and Mieneke are arrested on August 25, 1942.

### **Escorted Past the St. Servaas Bridge**

On this tragic day, twelve-year-old Pierre Lumens stands on the corner of Kleine Stokstraat and the Maastrichterbrugstraat, near the home of the Os-André family. He remembers standing there around noon when he sees how Mieneke Os, her brother Simon and one hundred of other Jews are forced to cross the St. Servaas Bridge and walk to the station.

### **From Maastricht to Westerbork to Cosel to Auschwitz**

Soon after, Pierre Lumens finds out that it was the Dutch police itself that had initiated this parade of horror. Without any involvement of German forces, the Dutch police had demanded all Jews to gather at the Professor Pieter Willemstraat before being deported to Westerbork. Pierre remembers Mieneke looking depressed, though not crying. On August 28, Johanna, Berta, Simon and Mieneke leave from camp Westerbork to Auschwitz. The train stops in Cosel, about 80 kilometres before the train's final destination. Here, all Jewish men between 15 and 50, including Simon Os, are separated from their wives, sisters and children to be transported to various camps to carry out forced labour.

Once in Auschwitz, Johanna (57) Bertha (55) and Mieneke (16) are gassed upon arrival. Bernard is murdered in Auschwitz on February 28<sup>th</sup>,

1943, and Simon Os is killed "somewhere in Central Europe" on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1943. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1943, Bernard's daughter Carolina Stella is placed on a children's transport from Vught to Westerbork, as is her mother Jeannette. Carolina Stella dies there on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1943, at age three. Her mother Jeannette is murdered on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1943, at the extermination camp Sobibor.

Only Celine and Leneke escape. Both go into hiding, but are arrested on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1944. Celine ends up in Westerbork, from where she can return to Maastricht after six months of labour.