



# BEZUIDENHOUT

3 MARCH 1945

Images and references on World War II in the Netherlands  
from before the war, the invasion, the occupation, bombardments,  
the hunger winter and the liberation

here with a focus on ...

# **BEZUIDENHOUT**

A recollection by John Van Leeuwen

Montreal, Canada 2011

Updated and revised by John and Peter Van Leeuwen, 2019



Dedicated to Lily Schnabel (née Bredemeyer)  
(1873 – 1957)  
Here on her 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday, 1943

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### Introduction

Tragic events are not unusual during war and there are countless examples of horrific experiences and events during the Second World War. But for the Netherlands and particularly for *Den Haag*,<sup>1</sup> the story of **Bezuidenhout** is an especially painful and devastating memory, never to be forgotten or replaced. There have been many stories told since by the survivors and their children, all well documented and freely available.<sup>2</sup> In this essay I will provide a sample, retold with a view from my own family.

In 1944, following on the heels of the (counter-) invasion on the beaches of Normandy, the people of Holland and Den Haag were well aware of the advances and gains made by the allies. On "dolle Dinstag" ("mad Tuesday", September 5, 1944<sup>3</sup>), people stood by the fields and canals eager to welcome and cheer on their liberators. However, the allies decided to abandon the planned advance into the Netherlands. Instead the "honger-winter" ("hunger winter") of 1944-45 followed. In early 1945 towards the end of the winter, many people were anxiously awaiting their liberation. However, the Germans were still very much intent on war, carnage and any means toward victory.

In a wooded park, the *Haagse Bos*,<sup>4</sup> to the east of the old city of Den Haag and between *Benoordenhout* and *Bezuidenhout* (see map,<sup>5</sup> below), the Germans had installed V2 rocket launching pads from which they were intent on destroying London. There were other sites as well, such as in *Duindigt* and *Wassenaar*, all well positioned under the cover of the forest canopy. However, the Dutch underground resistance fighters were very aware of their locations and were able to advise the allies accordingly.

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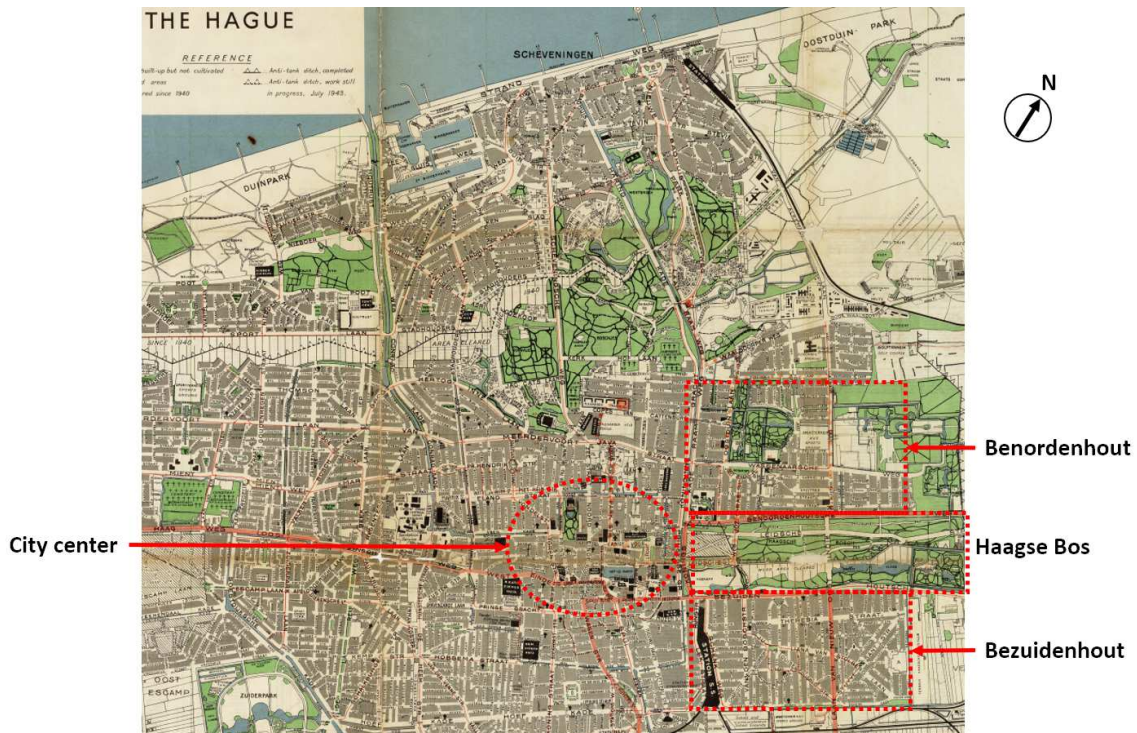
<sup>1</sup> Used interchangeably with "The Hague".

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. <http://www.haagseherinneringen.nl/pagina/100/inleading/>.

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolle\\_Dinsdag/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolle_Dinsdag/).

<sup>4</sup> Also: "Haagsche Bosch", "bos" / "bosch" = woods.

<sup>5</sup> This is an excerpt from "Town Plan of The Hague", published by the War Office, 1944. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/c5ff8a2a-96d8-4135-ac0f-5649e977f257/>.



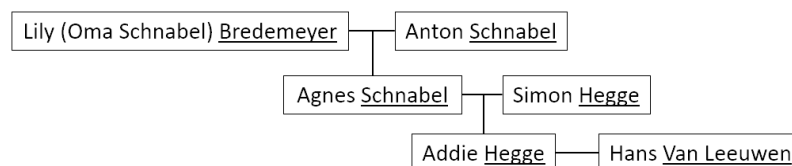
The British were taking a beating from V2 rocket attacks and they were of course intent on protecting their homeland. Along with allied support, they planned on mounting major bombing raids to destroy the V2 installations. On one such raid on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1945, they set off towards the V2 sites in the Haagse Bos, and so began the bombardment. Unfortunately, due to navigational errors, most of their 85 tons of explosive fell not on the Haagse Bos but instead directly on Bezuidenhout. This error resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people and destroyed most of the community – lives and property wiped out, never to be seen again.

In the following, I will try to provide images and links to these places and events. Some of these are closely associated with the lives of members of my own family. This is a fragment of history which I would like to honor. I would like to also pass it on to the generations that follow so they can respect their heritage and keep these memories close to their hearts and minds.

### Family Background

This story is woven about my great-grandmother *Lily Bredemeyer*. She married *Anton Schnabel* on Thursday, July 11, 1895. After a wonderful six-week honeymoon through Germany, Switzerland, France and Belgium, they settled down in *Leiden* where Anton owned a business. There they began to raise a family and had four children. The first child – *Agnes* – was born in 1896, followed by her brothers *Henri* and *Hans*, as well as *Wilhelm* who died very young. After twelve years in Leiden, Anton sold the business and moved the family to *Velp* and then, after another year, to Den Haag in 1908.

*Agnes Schnabel*, my grandmother, grew up and married *Simon Hegge* in 1918: She herself had a family of eight children. The family lived in a three-story house at *Thomsonplein 7* in Den Haag. Their oldest daughter, my mother *Adriana (Addie)*, was born in 1923. And so, Lily Schnabel, née Bredemeyer, was Addie's "Oma Schnabel".



After Anton Schnabel's unexpected death in 1928, Oma Schnabel continued to live in their house at *Regentesselaan 240* with her son Hans. After Hans married and moved out, Oma Schnabel stayed there alone for another seven years. The following photographs, taken by Hans around 1933, show Lily's rooms, including furniture, china and portraits of her grand- and great-grandparents.



For the Hegge family at the Thomsonplein, the Regentesselaan was not too far away and could be reached on foot or by bicycle. Addie was particularly fond of visiting her Oma which she would do on a regular basis. At the time of Oma Schnabel's move, Addie had just started her schooling in the MULO,<sup>6</sup> a Dutch school form on the level of junior high school, and her

<sup>6</sup> Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meer\\_Uitgebreid\\_Lager\\_Onderwijs/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meer_Uitgebreid_Lager_Onderwijs/).

school was just a few streets away from her Oma's new home. She would often visit when her classes were over.



Thomsonplein<sup>7</sup>



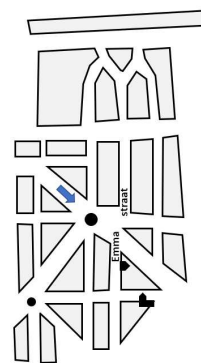
route<sup>8</sup>



Regentesselaan

As Oma Schnabel got older, it became more difficult for her to manage her household on the Regentesselaan. Her brother-in-law *Johannes Schnabel* had several children, the middle of his three boys was called Emile. *Emile Schnabel* was married to *Hanchen* and they also had eight children. They had lived in several places but in the early years of the war they rented a house on the *Emmastraat* in Bezuidenhout.

From the Haagse Bos, the *Emmastraat* ran in a north-west to south-east direction, crossing the east side of the *Juliana van Stolbergplein*. The map below<sup>9</sup> on the right is centered on the *Juliana van Stolbergplein*. The red circle shows the location of *Emmastraat 154*. The schematic on the right shows the location of the house on the *Emmastraat*, the *Juliana van Stolbergplein* (large dot) the *Charlotte von Bourbonplein* (small dot) and the *Wilhemina Kerk* (church) next to the *Louise van Colignyplein*. This schematic will be used as an orientation guide in many of the pictures presented below.



<sup>7</sup> Thomsonplein, 1930: <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/4c51efc1-d518-46d4-89d7-6e8181e8fa02/>.

<sup>8</sup> The route is colored in blue in an excerpt from "Town Plan of The Hague", see note on page 4.

<sup>9</sup> Excerpt of the "Town Plan of The Hague".



The following picture shows the Juliana van Stolbergplein as it was in 1908.<sup>10</sup> The direction of the view is along the arrow in the schematic map, above. Many streets ran off this square, Emmastraat crosses from left to right at the back of the square.



The premises rented by Emile and Hanchen Schnabel at Emmastraat 154 was located three houses from the corner, just below the Juliana van Stolbergplein. Oma Schnabel moved in with them, living on the second floor where she had two rooms and a den. She brought all her possessions with her into this house: the big family paintings, the many "old blue" plates, the souvenirs, the mementos, the letters from her mother, many documents relating to her grandfather *Wilhelm Friedrich Arnold*,<sup>11</sup> the travelogues of the many trips with Anton, the countless music books, pictures, ... and her priceless piano which she herself had paid for after finishing boarding school.

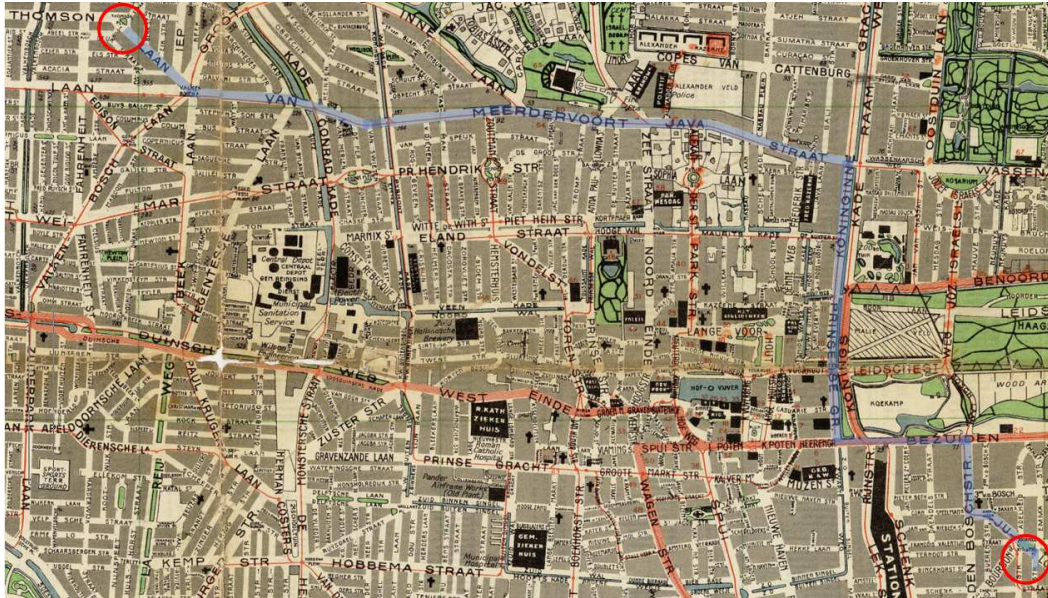
Compared to the Regentesselaan, Emmastraat was much farther away from both the Thomsonplein and Addie's school, making casual visits somewhat inconvenient. However, as a young girl, my mother Addie had a piano teacher (Emmy Beekman) who lived in Bezuidenhout. For her lessons Addie would travel there to take her lessons. Now that the Schnabels lived in the Emmastraat, she could take the opportunity to also visit her Oma. The map<sup>12</sup> below shows the route (blue) from Thomsonplein (circled top left) to Emmastraat (circled bottom right).

<sup>10</sup> Edited excerpt from a post card published by Trenkler Co., Dr., Leipzig, 1908.

<http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/a4556b42-96b6-4a2a-9ca0-0b702ce03fb0/>.

<sup>11</sup> German musician, music seller, publisher and folk-song collector. See Van Leeuwen P. A biography of Friedrich Wilhelm Arnold (1810-1864): A life imbued with music. 2018, 111pp (<http://www.van-leeuwen.de/history.html/>) or [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich\\_Wilhelm\\_Arnold/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Wilhelm_Arnold/).

<sup>12</sup> The route is colored in blue in this excerpt from "Town Plan of The Hague", see note on page 4.



From her house on Thomsonplein she would take the *Thomsonlaan* to the *Laan van de Meerdervort* which further east becomes *Javastraat*, then right on *Koningskade* down to *Bezuidenhoutseweg* up to the intersection at *Boschlaan*<sup>13</sup>, turn right until she arrived at the *Juliana van Stolberglaan* and go around the "plein" to *Emmastraat*. All in all, about a half hour speedy bicycle ride through the city.

The route took Addie along the *Haagse Bos* and the *Boslaan*, which can be seen in the following photo.<sup>14</sup> It shows a German checkpoint and blockade. This picture was actually taken after the liberation in May 1945. There are allied soldiers in a jeep talking to German (sic!) soldiers manning the checkpoint. The view is from the corner of *Boslaan* and *Leidsestraatweg* in northerly direction towards *Benordenhout*.



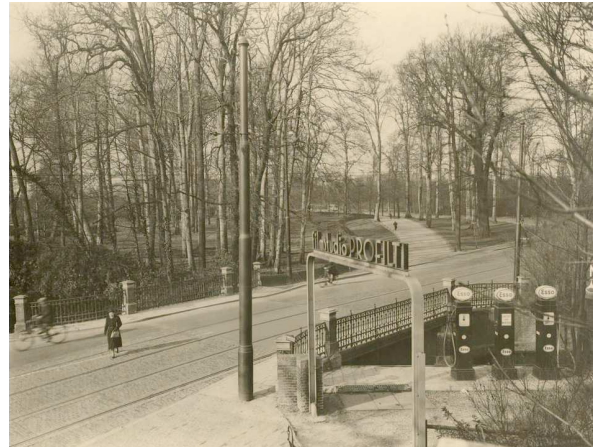
<sup>13</sup> Boschlaan synonymous with Boslaan.

<sup>14</sup> © J.J.M. van Santen 1945, with the kind permission of Ria van Beukering - van Santen.  
<http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/4b22fede-d106-4dfc-9c21-8864147de171/>.

At southern end of the Haagse Bos, Boslaan crosses the Bossloot ("sloot" = ditch or brook), intersects the Bezuidenhoutseweg and continues into Bezuidenhout. The pictures below show how Addie would have seen it in 1939.<sup>15</sup>



The view of the Boslaan, as seen from the intersection with the Bezuidenhoutseweg.



Boslaan crossing the Bossloot and opening onto the Bezuidenhoutseweg. Note the Esso gas pumps on the right.

Once the war had started and The Netherlands were occupied, life got harder year by year. Once, during the "honger-winter" of 1944-45, to help feed the family, Addie and her brother Jan had gone to *Oegstgeest* – about 20 km north-east of Den Haag – to fetch a load of carrots (200 kg!). On their way back, they had planned to go to Oom Emile and Tante Hanchen's in Bezuidenhout for the night. Jan was on the "bakfiets" – tricycle with a container in the front to transport goods (see photograph on page 20) – attached by a rope to a bike which Addie was riding. On an overpass the bike broke down due to the load, so it was placed on top of the carrots in the bakfiets. Addie shouldered the rope and pulled. It was slow going, the Germans were on the lookout for escaped prisoners and a February rainstorm was against them. They didn't make it to Bezuidenhout for the night but had to overnight in a church near *Wassenaar* instead.

As the war dragged on most commodities became scarce, and it became both extremely difficult to find food as well as fuel to heat the house. During the "honger-winter", Oma Schnabel came to stay with the Hegge family on Thomsonplein. So, she was not at home in Bezuidenhout at the beginning of March when the bombers came.

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<sup>15</sup> Both photographs from 1939: <https://bezuidenhout.nl/geheugen/bezuidenhoutseweg/>. On that web page, look for "BezuidenhoutsewegKruising Boslaan" (left photo) and "Boslaan (bosbrug)/Bezuidenhoutseweg" (right photo).

### About Bezuidenhout

This large upscale community began its early development in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and most of it was completed in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup>. It stood adjacent to the south side of the Haagsche Bosch, "zuid" in opposition to "nord". The following description (in Dutch) aptly captures the origins and populace of the community.

"Vanaf 1855 werd Bezuidenhout bebouwd en tussen de 1ste en 2de wereldoorlog bereikte het de omvang die het nu heeft. In 1863 werd Huis Ter Noot afgebroken en werden daar de Eerste en Tweede Van den Boschstraat gebouwd. In 1885 volgen de aanleg van de Adelheidstraat, Emmastraat en Wilhelminastraat (in 1942 op last van de Duitsers veranderd in Agathastraat). Het Bezuidenhout wordt bewoond door hogere ambtenaren, artsen, leraren en andere vertegenwoordigers van de gegoede middenstand, maar ook lieden van adel en leden van de Kamers der Staten-Generaal woonden hier. Bezuidenhout kon zich meten met Duinoord. Tot aan de oorlog was er sprake van een 'gegoede buurt' met royale huizen en ruime straten die nog niet volstonden met auto's. Velen hadden personeel in dienst dat boodschappen deed in de Theresiastraat."<sup>16</sup>

This roughly translates as:

"Bezuidenhout was built starting in 1855 and reached its present size between the 1st and 2nd world war. In 1863 the 'Huis Ter Noot' was demolished and the 'Eerste' and 'Tweede Van den Boschstraat' were built there. In 1885 the Adelheidstraat, Emmastraat and Wilhelminastraat were built (in 1942, changed into Agathastraat, on the order of the Germans). The Bezuidenhout was inhabited by higher civil servants, doctors, teachers and other representatives of the well-to-do middle class, but also by the gentry and members of the 'Kamers der Staten-Generaal' lived here. Bezuidenhout was comparable to Duinoord. Up until the war, there was talk of a 'well-to-do neighborhood' with spacious houses and spacious streets that were not yet filled with cars. Many residents employed personnel who did their shopping in the Theresiastraat."

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<sup>16</sup> <https://bezuidenhout.nl/4217-2/algemene-bzh-informatie/geschiedenis/tot-tweede-wereldoorlog/>.

### Pre-war Aerial Views

The following aerials were taken over Bezuidenhout. The first is a photo taken in 1934 from a zeppelin looking to the north.<sup>17</sup>

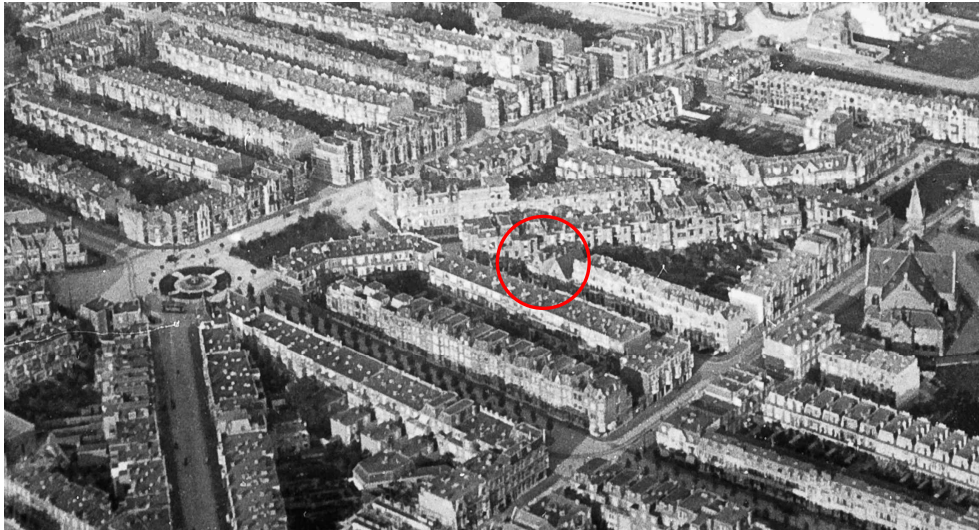


It shows that, at that time, Bezuidenhout was at the edge of the municipal development of The Hague. On the street at the top (Bezuidenhoutseweg, middle left towards top right) the steeple of the *Onze Lieve Vrouwe van Goede Raad Kerk* (church) is clearly visible. Above the Bezuidenhoutseweg lies the large dark rectangle that is the Haagsche Bosch. These were the woods in which the Germans hid the V2 rockets in 1945. Beyond the woods there are fields, smaller communities, and then eventually the immensity of the North Sea (top).

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<sup>17</sup> From the Beeldbank van de Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (<http://beeldbank.cultureelerfgoed.nl/>), Objectnummer 413.756.

The following image is a more detailed excerpt of the above photo. One can see the Juliana van Stolbergplein, a roundabout in the middle of the suburb. Radiating out from there the *Juliana van Stolberglaan* (up towards the right), *Louise de Colignylaan* (opening up on the Louise de Colignyplein), the *Emmastraat*, *Adelheidstraat* and *Charlotte de Bourbonstraat* (compare with the photo on page 8). On the right is the Wilhemina Kerk facing the Colignyplein. The red circle indicates the location of the Schnabel home.

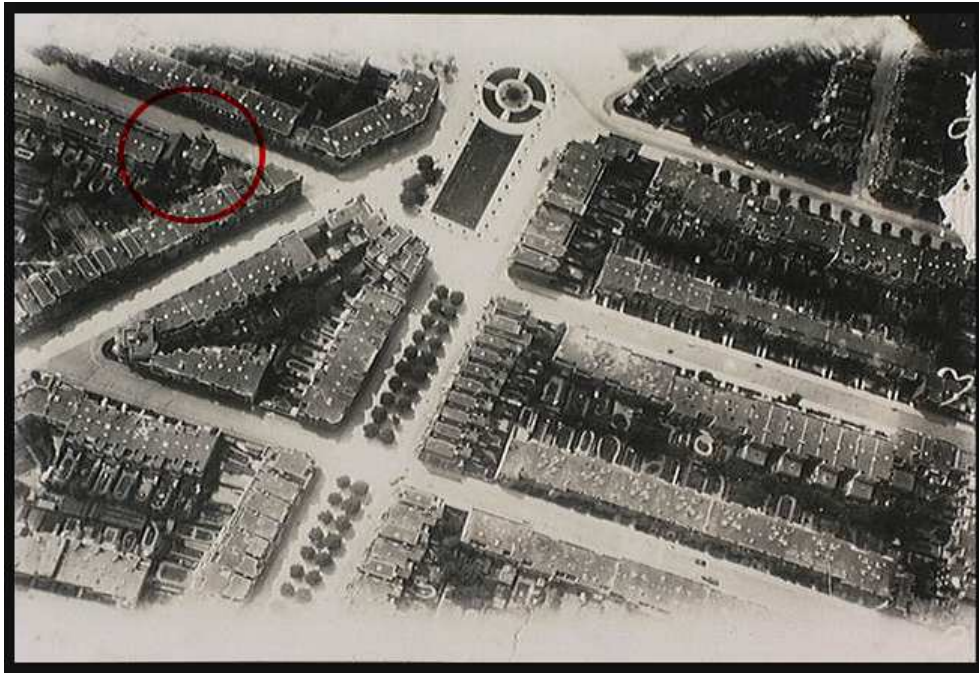


In the following aerial looking east one can see the Julianna van Stolbergplein with Juliana van Stolberglaan (left) and Louise de Colignylaan (center).<sup>18</sup> Emmastraat runs across the back of the square in front of the buildings. Can you locate the house where Oma Schnabel lived with Oom Emile and Tante Hanchen?



<sup>18</sup> <https://bezuidenhout.nl/geheugen/overzichtfotos-bezuidenhout/>.

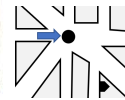
Here, in an aerial taken in 1925, the Emmastraat runs from the top-left to the mid-right, passing below the square.<sup>19</sup> The house where Oma Schnabel later lived with Oom Emile and Tante Hanchen is third house to the left from the corner on the square.



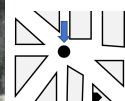
<sup>19</sup> Photo taken by the "Militaire Vliegdiens" in 1925. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/093bd8bf-56d3-4293-aadf-a59dd660448a/>.

### Pre-war Street Views

The following pages show street view photos and postcards of Bezuidenhout from the early twentieth century and leading up to the second world war. For example, below the Juliana van Stolbergplein around 1910 looking down the Juliana van Stolberglaan.<sup>20</sup> Emmastraat runs from left to right directly across and in front of the buildings seen on the right.



Turning 90° clockwise, one looked down *Adelheidstraat* from Juliana van Stolbergplein towards the *Schenkstraat*.<sup>21</sup> Emmastraat would be the next street over to the left. These pictures from the early twentieth century clearly demonstrate a prosperous community with large clean boulevards, three story houses, shops and churches, and the manicured squares and monuments.

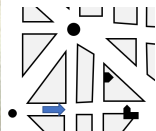


<sup>20</sup> Postcard, ca. 1910. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/9a77b9c4-78cc-4972-9a1a-125cabee19d/>.

<sup>21</sup> Postcard, 1910. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/814d6355-a06a-4c9d-bb99-ce71f8550c98/>.



Further down the Adelheidstraat, it intersects with the Schenkstraat, here looking north along the Schenkstraat towards Louise de Colignyplein with the Wilhelmina Kerk.<sup>22</sup>



Backing down the Scheckstraat up to the Charlotte von Bourbonplein one had this view<sup>23</sup> with the *Hannoverstraat* on the far right.



<sup>22</sup> Photo from the archive of the Nederlandsche Rotogravure-Maatschappij, Leiden, taken ca. 1917.  
<http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/1b2af243-e334-46d4-91b6-acc542a78f52/>.

<sup>23</sup> In 2018, this photo was viewable at <https://www.htmfoto.net/algemeen/tonen2.php?pagina=1290713238/>, the site is now offline.

Moving up the Schenkstraat one arrived at the Louise de Colignyplein, here with the view facing the Wilhelmina Kerk.<sup>24</sup>



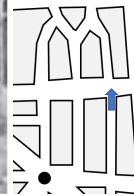
On the Louise de Colignyplein one finds, strangely enough, the Juliana van Stolberg monument (Wilhelmina Kerk out of view on the left).<sup>25</sup>



<sup>24</sup> Postcard, ca. 1910. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/d8cfd51a-d9a0-4354-bcbf-1cb97fc6ede/>.

<sup>25</sup> Photograph taken by JosPé, ca. 1935. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/1aab1a6e-c5b5-9af2-5bfd-3ca12fd9e5b6/>.

Shifting to the area north of the Juliana van Stolbergplein, the following picture from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shows the *Wilhelminastraat* as seen from the *Theresienstraat* curving in the direction of the Emmapark and the Bezuidenhoutseweg.<sup>26</sup>



This is a view of the Emmapark, seen from Bezuidenhoutseweg with the Theresienstraat on the left.<sup>27</sup>



<sup>26</sup> Postcard, ca. 1900. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/7140eed0-a457-45d6-a40c-8b3e6f60e7fc/>.

<sup>27</sup> Photograph taken ca. 1903, author unknown. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/608018c8-591c-45fa-bfca-ac1f5e41c7d8/>.

The following postcard from 1907 show the Bezuidenhoutseweg looking towards the north.<sup>28</sup> One can see the trees and bushes at the Emmapark in the mid-right and further down the Catholic church Onze Lieve Vrouwe van Goede Raad. Its tall steeple visible can also be clearly seen in the aerial from 1934 (page 12).



The same view but closer to the Emmapark (at the right).<sup>29</sup> The Emmastraat tramway stop on Bezuidenhoutseweg was here, near the corner of Boslaan, where Addie and the Hegge family would often pass on their way to Emmastraat. This was one of the few areas to survive the bombardment.



<sup>28</sup> Postcard from ca. 1907. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/f4e7b232-dc5a-47da-aac7-5956a54d30fe/>.

<sup>29</sup> Photograph taken around May 1924. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/6c0cfbd9c-9c54-4398-b970-2afc2de4e636/>.

A bit further back, a long view of the Bezuidhoutweg around 1900 with the café Boschlust on the left.<sup>30</sup>



In the other direction, past the church, we have this view along the Haagse Bosch, probably at the corner of the *Nieuw Oost-Indie Laan*.<sup>31</sup> Note the "bakfiets" (carrier bike) at the bottom right.



All these pictures give the impression of a diverse urban community: busy streets with stores and traffic of all sorts, well-to-do quieter residential areas, smaller streets with local shops, broad avenues interrupted by greened squares with imposing monuments, churches spread around the suburb.

<sup>30</sup> Postcard from ca. 1900. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/71a2251d-42ea-4c35-9cfb-61cc2b419c05/>.

<sup>31</sup> In 2018, this photo was available at <https://www.htmfoto.net/index.php?page=series/Kesber/index.htm/> (line 1, right), now offline.

### Maps of Bezuidenhout

I have been fortunate to find a few old maps, particularly ones that are dated pre-war since after the bombardment the streets were never again configured the same way. Following the war, Den Haag experienced tremendous growth and Bezuidenhout almost completely changed, with highways and other more modern services and buildings encroaching and intersecting the community that buried the former upscale residential area forever. Very few streets remain that may still provide a sense of what stood here before the war, Emmastraat and Emmapark north of Juliana van Stolberglaan serves as examples.

The first map below is a colorful streetcar map from 1939 and is a wonderful display of the area, clearly showing details such as street names, church locations and of course tramway lines and routes.<sup>32</sup>

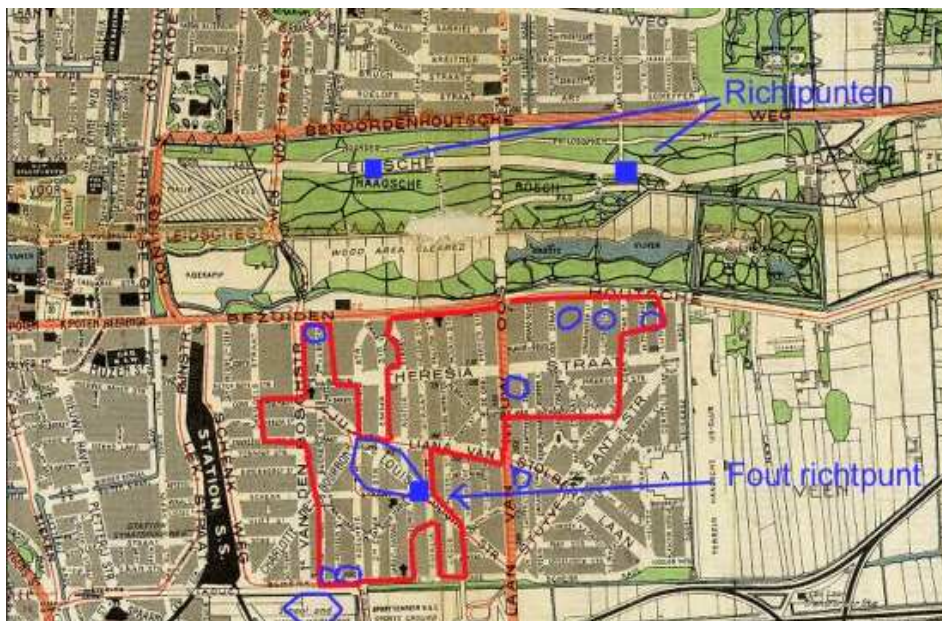


<sup>32</sup> This map can be found <https://bezuidenhout.nl/geheugen/> which lists information and pictures of the streets of Bezuidenhout. See e.g. <https://bezuidenhout.nl/geheugen/bezuidenhoutseweg/>, bottom of page.

The following map is another excerpt of the The Hague map used on the previous pages. This map was based on an original Dutch street map but was actually prepared by the British War Office in 1944 (note the use of English).<sup>33</sup> It was used to help prepare and direct the bombing mission. The similarity to the previous map could be linked to the theory that the Dutch underground provided details of German activity and locations of key military installations. The red circle again highlights the location of the Schnabel house.



The next map is based on the same source but shows the result of the March 3 bombing.<sup>34</sup>



<sup>33</sup> This version is at [http://www.aanema.cistron.nl/ges/straten/bezuidenhoutseweg\\_boschlust.htm/](http://www.aanema.cistron.nl/ges/straten/bezuidenhoutseweg_boschlust.htm/). It is based on an excerpt from "Town Plan of The Hague", published by the War Office, 1944. It can be found at <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/c5ff8a2a-96d8-4135-ac0f-5649e977f257/>.

<sup>34</sup> See [http://www.haagseherinneringen.nl/pagina/102/het\\_bombardement/](http://www.haagseherinneringen.nl/pagina/102/het_bombardement/).

The markings highlight the navigational errors that led to the tragic bombing mistake on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The upper two dark blue squares indicate the real intended targets ("Richtpunten") while the lower dark blue square indicates the actual landing locations of the 85 tons of bombs ("Fout richtpunt"). The dark red line is the Brandgrens or "fire border": everything inside of this area was destroyed. This clearly indicates that the area between Juliana van Stolbergplein and Louise de Colignyplein was very heavily hit.

The last map in this series provides details on the location of every building in Bezuidenhout with red borders outlining those areas destroyed and green lines those areas that survived complete devastation.<sup>35</sup>



<sup>35</sup> This version can be seen at [http://www.aanema.cistron.nl/ges/straten/bezuidenhoutseweg\\_boschlust.htm/](http://www.aanema.cistron.nl/ges/straten/bezuidenhoutseweg_boschlust.htm/). It is based on an excerpt from a map made by the *Brandweer 's-Gravenhage* (Den Haag Fire department, see <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/fead7103-6560-428f-917b-b0f09ed22cbd/>).

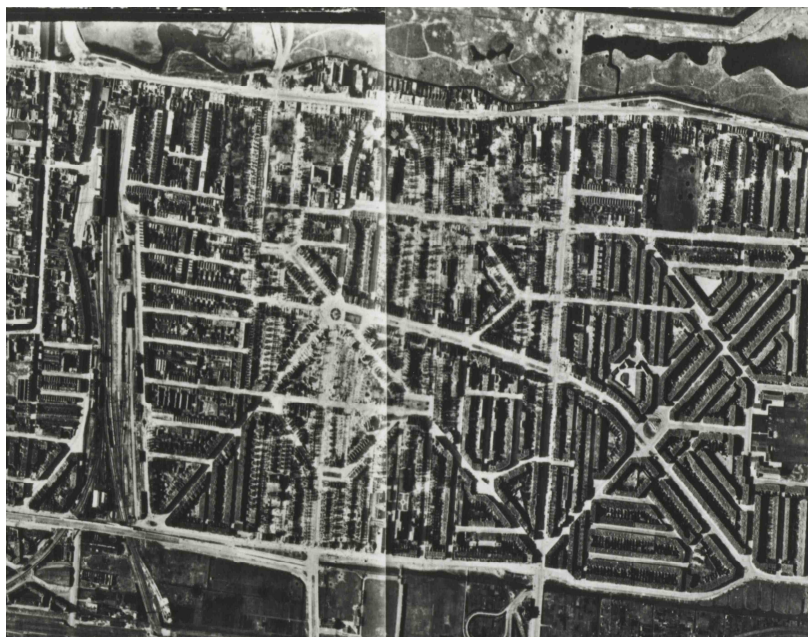


### Aerial Images of the Bombardment

The following pages contain aerial images and photos of Bezuidenhout following the bombing mission of March 3, 1945. On the day of the attack, the RAF documented the results of their action. The following picture is an excerpt from a composite of several RAF aerial photographs showing the smoke from the burning buildings (Haagse Bos at the top).<sup>36</sup>



Two weeks later the RAF aerial images of roughly the same area shows ruins at the epicenter of the bombing denoted by the whiter area.<sup>37</sup>



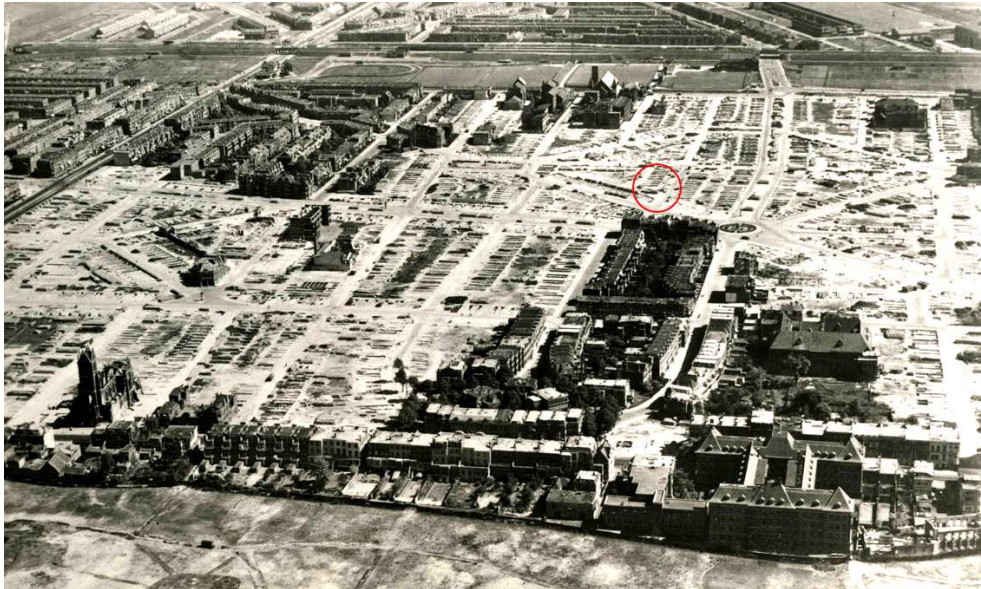
<sup>36</sup> <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/64f3a0ca-e553-4445-964a-a163f3779192/>.

<sup>37</sup> Photograph taken March 18, 1945. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/bc75d5ad-f392-459e-bb15-8766b452ee9d/>.

The detail, below, of the above picture shows the Juliana van Stolbergplein, clearly visible among the surrounding rubble. In the surrounding streets, the remains of the roofless, burnt-out houses look like empty boxes and the pieces of the walls left standing cast long shadows across the streets. Within the red circle, indicating the area where the Schnabel house once stood, nothing was left standing.



The following image shows Bezuidenhout a few months after the bombardment, when most of the rubble had been cleared.<sup>38</sup> The ruined remains of the buildings had been demolished, the roads had been cleared and bricks and other debris removed or set aside. Whatever wood remained after the fires created by the bombing was quickly taken away by people living in surrounding areas to help them heat and cook. There were several reports of looters being shot and executed after being caught by German sentries.



The Haagse Bos is at the bottom of this photo, now tree-less. Just above it is the first street along the Bos (Bezuidenhoutseweg), mostly still standing. The group of undamaged buildings in the middle lead up to Juliana van Stolbergplein where above and beyond everything had been destroyed. The red circle shows the location of where the Schnabel house used to stand. The churches on the Bezuidenhoutseweg (Onze Lieve Vrouwe van Goede Raad, page 19) and Schenkstraat (Wilhelmina Kerk, page 17) can still be seen at the bottom left and middle top. The Boslaan is at the very right.

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<sup>38</sup> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bezuidenhout\\_in\\_1946\\_\(The\\_Hague,\\_the\\_Netherlands\).jpg/](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bezuidenhout_in_1946_(The_Hague,_the_Netherlands).jpg/).

### On the Street in Bezuidenhout after the Bombardment:

The following images were found on various web sites and sources. All are offered up to hopefully demonstrate and share the history, to support the stories of the people and the times, the pain and loss, to provide witness to the complete devastation of a community and its people.

The photo below was taken in immediate aftermath of the attack and shows the smoke from the burning buildings.<sup>39</sup> It was taken from the west looking towards the Bezuidenhoutseweg and shows the steeple of the Onze Lieve Vrouwe van Goede Raad church on the left. Compare to the aerial photograph shown on page 24, the smoke column in the foreground corresponds to the one on the left side of that photo.



There were 510 people were killed, 230 more seriously injured, 3315 homes destroyed, another 1217 heavily damaged, as well as five churches and nine schools, ... sadly all just two months before the liberation.

Following the bombing, the Germans decided to demonstrate that the raid had been a failure and that their V2 rockets and launching pads were safe and intact. On the very same night, that of the 3rd of March, as well as the following night, the Germans launched their V2s across the English Channel. Unfortunately, one of the V2s misfired and plunged back down on the corner of the Schenkweg and the Vlietstraat. This expanded the destruction of Bezuidenhout out to the west as another part of the community was destroyed. Eight firemen from the Hague lost their lives there.

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<sup>39</sup> Photo taken by the Urban Development and Housing Department on March 3, 1945.  
<http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/833e9388-4805-44fd-b80b-2ee6a8342bfc/>.

The following photos pinpoint some of the hardest hit areas, such as around the Juliana van Stolbergplein. The square and its adornments, the fountain guarded by four lions were now pockmarked by shrapnel and blackened by soot from the fire bombs. The view below was at the corner of the Adelheidstraat, looking across the square in the direction of the Juliana van Stolberglaan.<sup>40</sup>



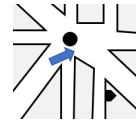
Turning to the left, the next photograph shows the square facing south towards Adelheidstraat (left) and Charlotte de Bourbonstraat (middle).<sup>41</sup> The ruins just above the man with the cart were all that remained of the house in the right of the bottom picture on page 15.



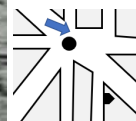
<sup>40</sup> Photo: CPA Kanters, March 4, 1945. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/a5630a1e-d47a-4949-86b1-7c67a222a988/>.

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.aanema.cistron.nl/ges/straten/bezuidenhoutseweg\\_boschlust.htm](http://www.aanema.cistron.nl/ges/straten/bezuidenhoutseweg_boschlust.htm)

The view from the rubble on the other side of the square can be seen in the next picture taken from the Adelheitstraat.<sup>42</sup> The Juliana van Stolberglaan runs from left to right, roughly the same view as page 15, top.



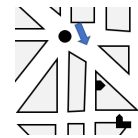
Moving to the left in the above picture gives a view across the Juliana van Stolbergplein, looking east up the Louise de Colignystraat.<sup>43</sup> The Emmastraat crosses just in front of the remains of the buildings still standing (the ones which can be seen just right of the monument in the postcard on page 15, top).



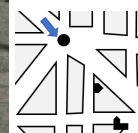
<sup>42</sup> Photo: Willy Schurman (Municipal Gardens), 1945, <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/4b8afd99-e928-448a-a8a5-aa6aef1872aa/>.

<sup>43</sup> Photo: JAB von Münching, March 1945, <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/e3a3a218-3b68-4101-a7fd-8bb587bc5b98/>.

Closing in on the above perspective and moving a bit to the left, the next picture shows the wasted square, behind it the Louise de Colignystraat.<sup>44</sup> To the very right, behind the standing white wall, would be the flattened remains of Emile and Hanchen Schnabel's house. Just above that wall, the tower of the Wilhelmina Kerk can be seen in the distance.



A slight shift to the right gives a view over the damaged, blackened monument with the rubble of the Schnabel's house just beyond the pile of bricks right of the lion's head.<sup>45</sup> It lies between the standing white wall and the tower of the Wilhelmina Kerk, now separated due to the change in point of view.



<sup>44</sup> Photo: Willy Schurman (Municipal Gardens), 1945, <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/761fef42-65af-48b6-8b18-bc08e3d46082/>.

<sup>45</sup> Photo: Willy Schurman (Municipal Gardens), <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/40bda584-cf6b-40aa-bcc5-74a245928462/>.

How the bombing and its consequences were experienced by the people living in the area at the time can also be construed by several anecdotes, related by Addie van Leeuwen.

In March 1945, Emile & Hännchen were still living in the Emmastraat with two of their boys. When the bombing started, they left their apartment, realizing that they were in danger. There was no time to secure or protect their larger possessions, but they carried their "vlucht koffertje", a suitcase containing important documents, valuables, etc. They fled down the Emmastraat away from the Colignyplein to the Schenkade in the south. During the flight away from the bombing, Emile and one of the boys were injured in the legs by flying splinters.

As regular news services such as newspapers or radio no longer existed, there was no official way for the residents of The Hague to know what had happened when and where. Usually, the news was spread via gossip, more or less reliably. However, the Hegge family had a neighbor, Mijneer Bakker, who had a secret radio and was able to receive information from various sources such as the BBC. When he heard about the bombing in Bezuidenhout, he immediately informed Addie's parents.

And so, on the day after the bombing, Simon Hegge and his daughter Addie went to the Emmastraat to check the damage and if anything could be salvaged. They were on foot and it took a while. Having reached the western end of Bezuidenhout, it became more difficult as well-known landmarks in the cityscape had disappeared and the streets were full of debris. They first oriented themselves using the steeple of the *Onze Lieve Vrouwe van Goede Raad* church. They recognized the intersection at the Boslaan and made their way through the destruction to the Juliana van Stolbergplein. The remains of the monuments helped them find the Emmastraat and went to the spot where they presumed the 3<sup>rd</sup> house should have been. In the end they identified the spot because they saw clutches of wires, which they thought were electricity cables, protruding from the rubble. When they realized that they were in fact the strings of Oma Schnabel's piano, they knew she had found the remains of the house. Below the wreckage were many of her irreplaceable possessions, now burned and crushed. These included not only her piano but also the family portraits dating back as far as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, old porcelain and furniture as well as the letter correspondence of her grandfather Friedrich Wilhelm Arnold with composers of his day (e.g. Johannes Brahms and Robert Schumann). So, at the end of the day, Addie and her father came back more or less empty handed.

In the following days and weeks, the debris was cleared and anything of value that was found was brought to the local police stations. During that time, Addie's brother Harry went one of the police stations, where items found in the rubble were collected and displayed for people to pick up. There he found the crumpled photograph of Oma Schnabel's husband Anton.

During that time Addie also managed to find a wheelchair with which she transported her grandmother to the Emmastraat, so that Oma Schnabel could see what had happened.



From the vantage point of the Charlotte de Bourbonstraat, the view towards Juliana van Stolbergplein shows the rubble partially cleared.<sup>46</sup>



Turning to the right, the photograph below shows the Charlotte von Bourbonplein and the view up the Schenkstraat towards the Wilhelmina Kerk.<sup>47</sup> Compare with the bottom picture on page 16.



<sup>46</sup> [http://www.haagseherinneringen.nl/pagina/120/het\\_verhaal\\_van\\_een\\_wonder/](http://www.haagseherinneringen.nl/pagina/120/het_verhaal_van_een_wonder/).

<sup>47</sup> Photo: HAW Douwes, March 1945, <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/cd07b3a2-96ac-4a07-9301-b060b5e3103f/>.

Below, another view over the Charlotte de Bourbonplein looking east towards Hannoverstraat,<sup>48</sup> almost the same as on page 16.



Of the houses on the Louise de Colignyplein, not much was left over apart from their frames.<sup>49</sup> Compare with bottom photo on page 17.



These skeletal remains were soon torn down, as seen on the next photo.<sup>50</sup> This shows the Schenkstraat (foreground) looking west over Louise de Colignyplein towards Juliana van

<sup>48</sup> Photo: HAW Douwes, March 1945, <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/48b4ee79-46da-4f3d-b097-5d687cc28d8e/>. See also: [http://www.haagseherinneringen.nl/pagina/120/het\\_verhaal\\_van\\_een\\_wonder/](http://www.haagseherinneringen.nl/pagina/120/het_verhaal_van_een_wonder/).

<sup>49</sup> Photo: HGL Schimmelpenningh, March, <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/6bee2716-6f0f-4f26-a3de-07e27552dd40/>.

Stolbergplein where Emmastraat runs top right to left in front of the square. The flattened remains of the Schnabel's house are in the middle of the picture just above center.



<sup>50</sup> Photo: Fotoburo Meyer, 1945, <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/94137c6e-b390-476e-be7e-f7702e2a7fb9/>.

### Epilogue

For the remainder of the war, Oma Schnabel stayed at her daughter's house in the Thomsonplein. After the liberation by the allies, the process of rebuilding began for all, reconstructing not just the destroyed buildings and communities, but also professional and educational pursuits, and, most importantly, regenerating family lives.



Liberation Day in the Kraijenhoffstraat, The Hague, May 1945.<sup>51</sup>

Below is a photo taken three years later (1948) of the family at Thomsomplein including not only Oma Schnabel (in front of the door), Agnes & Simon Hegge (to her right) and their children, but also my father *Hans van Leeuwen* (kneeling) and my oldest brother (one year old) *Tony* (born in 1947) on Addie's lap. Missing from the family photo is Ton Hegge, Addie's older brother: he was executed by the Germans in 1944 for his work in the Dutch resistance.<sup>52</sup>



©

<sup>51</sup> Photo: Meyer Fotoburo, May 1945 by. <http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/afbeelding/49822fe0-99b9-4a98-b31a-8f0ec50a2eaf/>.

<sup>52</sup> See [http://www.van-leeuwen.de/history/Hegge\\_Ton.html/](http://www.van-leeuwen.de/history/Hegge_Ton.html/).

There are many more stories, and pictures, too many to place here. It is always much more real and meaningful when history connects directly to your family and friends. That is not to say that anyone here is insensitive to the stories and sufferings of others unknown to them, only that these are the memories that were witnessed and recollected by those that we know, first-hand accounts, told by our mothers and fathers to remember and pass on to others who were not there, who find it too difficult to imagine such horrors, who may question the facts. So, let it be forever told that this was the truth, that we were there, and no one will ever forget.

Links to Sources and References:

- Wikipedia:  
[http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombardement\\_op\\_het\\_Bezuidenhout/](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombardement_op_het_Bezuidenhout/).
- Video material on the World News© website:  
[http://wn.com/bombardement\\_bezuidenhout/](http://wn.com/bombardement_bezuidenhout/).
- Some history Bezuidenhout and the Haagsche Bosch on a The Hague history site (Geschiedenis van Den Haag):  
[https://anema.home.xs4all.nl/ges/onderwerpen/bombardement\\_bezuidenhout\\_inleiding.htm/](https://anema.home.xs4all.nl/ges/onderwerpen/bombardement_bezuidenhout_inleiding.htm/).  
[http://www.aanema.cistron.nl/ges/straten/bezuidenhoutseweg\\_boschlust.htm/](http://www.aanema.cistron.nl/ges/straten/bezuidenhoutseweg_boschlust.htm/).
- Information on Bezuidenhout:  
<http://www.bezuidenhout.nl/>, Search for "bombardement".  
see also: <https://bezuidenhout.nl/geheugen/>.
- The Municipal Archive of the city of The Hague:  
<http://www.haagsebeeldbank.nl/>.
- Memories from The Hague:  
<http://www.haagseherinneringen.nl/pagina/100/inleading/>.
- Verbeek JR. Deployment of the V2 rockets and the terrors for the city and her inhabitants:  
<http://www.v2platform.nl/book/bombing.html/>.
- Site on V2 rockets:  
<http://www.v2rocket.com/start/deployment/denhaag.html/>.
- Information on Juliana van Stolberg and the monument on Louise de Colignyplein:  
<http://www.vanderkrogt.net/standbeelden/object.php?record=ZH15ic/>.

The stories of our family were in part related by Addie Van Leeuwen. Other information can be found in

- Schnabel L. *History of the Schnabel-Bredemeyer Family*. 1947 (translated and edited by Adriana Van Leeuwen. 1999), 44pp.
- Van Leeuwen-Gagnon, T. "*Lex, the game is up.*" *From Oma to her grandson Thomas, a hero's story lives on*. Published online 2009, 4pp.  
[http://www.van-leeuwen.de/history/Hegge\\_Ton.html/](http://www.van-leeuwen.de/history/Hegge_Ton.html/).

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