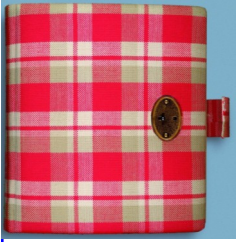


Commemorating Anne Frank

---Mirta Glasman

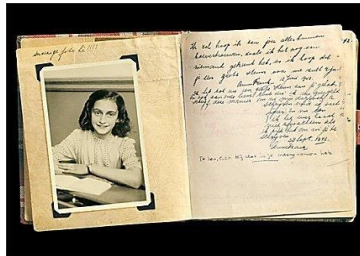
Throughout the Holocaust, Jewish children documented their experiences in camps, ghettos, forests, and hiding places. While the opportunities and materials to express their joys, pain, longings, anger, and sorrows in literary and artistic creations were very limited, an impressive body of work has survived, leaving a lasting legacy of both their oppression and resilience. In this article, I will share some of those stories. Part I discusses Anne Frank. [Part II discusses other child diarists.](#)

Anne Frank is undoubtedly one of the most known child Holocaust diarists. She was born on 12 June 1929 in Frankfurt. The Nazis came to power in 1933. Otto and Edith Frank, Anne's parents, no longer saw a future for their family in Germany. The same year, the family moved to Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands, where Otto had started a company named Opekta. Opekta, the product, was used in jam-making.



First edition of the diary
Collection: Anne Frank

For her thirteenth birthday, Anne Frank received a diary. *'Maybe one of my nicest presents...'* she wrote about the red-checked book. On the cover page, she wrote:



The diary Anne Frank receives for her 13th birthday.

Photo collection Anne Frank
Stichting, Amsterdam

'I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support. (Anne Frank, 12 June 1942).' Two days later, on her next entry, she wrote about the anti-Jewish measures enacted and how Jews were excluded from society. Also, she talked about her birthday party, her gifts, her friends, being in love, her family history, and her school class.



Anne in her final year of Primary school 1940.

Photo collection: Anne Frank
Stichting, Amsterdam
photographer unknown

The Frank family tried to escape the Nazis. Their emigration plans were thwarted, and Otto Frank realized that they would have to hide from the Nazis in order to survive. On 5 July 1942 Margot, Anne's sister, received a call-up to report to a labour camp in Germany. Otto and Edith had anticipated the call-up and had planned to go into hiding where Otto had set up an annex of his business premises. Because of Margot's call-up, they accelerated their move. They left their home and told their subtenant that they were going to Switzerland. The family went into hiding, together with the Van Pels family and Fritz Pfeffer, who joined them a few months later.

A few days later, Anne wrote about being in hiding in her diary. *'Of course we are not allowed to look out of the window at all or go outside. Also we have to do everything softly in case they hear us below.'* Also, she wrote: *'The nicest part is being able to write down all my thoughts and feelings; otherwise, I'd absolutely suffocate.'* (Anne Frank, 16 March 1944.)

On the radio Dutch minister Bolkestein, who had fled to London because of the war, asked the Dutch to hang on to important documents, so that it would be clear after the war what they all had experienced during the German occupation. Anne was inspired by him and planned to publish a book about her time in hiding. She also came up with a title: Het Achterhuis, or The Secret Annex. She started working very hard on this project and rewrote a large part of her diary, omitted some texts and added many new ones.

Unexpectedly, on 4 August 1944, the Sicherheitspolizei (Nazi security police) raided the hiding place. They were taken to Westerbork, a transit camp in the Netherlands, and then put on a transport to Auschwitz. On 30 October 1944, Anne and Margot were selected for forced labour in the German war industry and taken to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where they contracted spotted typhus. They died in February 1945.

Otto Frank was the only one of the secret annex residents to survive. Miep, one of their six helpers, had kept Anne's diaries and gave them to Otto. For some time, Otto did not have the courage to read them, but eventually he did and decided to compile a manuscript. Anne's wish to become a published author came true on 25 June 1947. The book was entitled *The Secret Annex: Diary letters from 14 June 1942 - 1 August 1944*. 3,000 copies were printed for the first edition.

Anne Frank and her sister Margot visit Gabriele Kahn and her niece Ellen Weinberger. Gabrielle is the daughter of friends of Otto and Edith, who also fled Germany to come to the Netherlands. Amsterdam, 1934.

Photo collection: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., courtesy of Penny Boyer



TO CONTINUE READING MORE ABOUT OTHER CHILD HOLOCAUST DIARISTS, [CLICK HERE.](#)