

Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl

by Anne Frank

Before Hiding

Anne Frank was born in 1929. At that time, the Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler, was in power. Hitler tried to control certain people, especially the Jews, by taking away their businesses, not allowing them to use public transportation, putting them in prison, beating, and murdering them. Jews had to wear yellow stars to identify themselves. Hitler's power began in Germany, but his army invaded other countries, and his control spread.

The first countries that were invaded were Austria and Poland. The people in those countries had to follow the Nazi Party rules. France and Britain declared war on Germany on September 1, 1939, and that marked the beginning of World War II.

Anne Frank got her diary for her 13th birthday, June 12, 1942. She named her diary "Kitty" and wrote in it nearly every day. At the beginning, she wrote about school and other ordinary teenage topics. Anne had many boyfriends and loved parties, movies, and movie stars. When the war began to affect her life, she wrote about it more and more. Anne, her mother, father, and sister, Margot, lived in Amsterdam. The Nazi laws made them afraid, because Anne and her family were Jewish. Her father began to talk about going into hiding.

The government would send call notices to people telling them to report to the Nazis. Many of the people receiving the call notices were taken to jails. Anne's father received one, and the whole family was worried. Anne wrote, "... a call-up; everyone knows what that means. I picture concentration camps and lonely cells..." (July 8, 1942). When the family found out it was not for Anne's father, but for her sister, Margot, the family went into hiding.

Hiding

Anne packed her diary, curlers, handkerchiefs, schoolbooks, a comb and some letters in a backpack. One of her father's co-workers, Miep, helped them hide. They were going to a hidden part of her father's office, which they called the Secret Annex.

The first days were spent unpacking boxes, cleaning, and organizing. Anne and Margot shared a room, their parents had a room, and another couple and their son, the VanPels, had the last room. They stored supplies in the attic.

The other workers brought them food, books, and news of Amsterdam. During the day, everyone had to be very quiet. They could only walk around in stocking feet and could not use the toilet or run water from 9:00 in the morning until 7:00 in the evening. Anne studied her schoolwork, read books, and practiced shorthand during those long, quiet days. In the evenings, after the workers in the warehouse had gone home, they cooked their meals, talked, and listened to the radio. As time went by, the families felt more crowded. There was not much space for seven people. Anne had no friends to talk to, so she told her diary how she felt during this time.

After four months of hiding, another person, Mr. Pfeffer, came to stay in their secret

place. They were glad to talk to someone who had been out in the world, but soon, Anne grew tired of the new man. He told her parents how to raise their children, and it made Anne mad. Some nights Anne could hear airplanes dropping bombs. None of the eight people got much sleep those nights.

Food was rationed in Amsterdam. People like Miep gave up some of their rations so the Franks could have enough food. At one point, someone broke into the attic and stole some of their supplies. Everyone was afraid the burglar had heard them and would tell the Nazis about their hiding place. By October, 1943, the families were very nervous. Anne talked back to the adults and was not always cheerful. Peter and Anne began to spend a lot of time together which worried the adults. Being in hiding was difficult.

After the United States joined the war, the families hoped their time of hiding would soon be over. Anne made her last diary entry on August 1, 1944. She felt none of those in hiding knew her very well. She dreamed about being a writer after the war and falling in love. Three days later the German police found them and took them all away. Someone had reported that Jews were hiding in the warehouse.

After Hiding

The police let them pack a few clothes. Later, Miep went into the Secret Annex and saw papers and clothes spread all over. The police had looked for money and jewelry, but they did not take Anne's diary. Miep picked it up and hid it in her desk.

First, the Franks were sent to a concentration camp called Westerbork, then to the death camp at Auschwitz, in Poland. The women were forced to walk from there to another camp. Anne, Margot, her mother, and Peter's mother went there together.

The conditions at the camps were terrible. The prisoners were given little food and no medicine. Many people died of sickness and starvation. Thousands more died in the gas chambers where they breathed poison gas. Anne, Margot and their mother died in this way. The only person to survive out of the group in hiding was Anne's father, Otto Frank. Mr. Frank did not find out his two daughters and wife were dead until two months after his release.

Anne's diary was published into a book in 1947, and later translated into French, German, and English. Mr. Frank spent the rest of his life telling about the war, the hatred the Nazis had for Jews, and spreading Anne's ideas for a peaceful world.