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## The Front Part of the House and the Annex

- 49 The Warehouse
- 57 The Private Office and the Kitchen
- 63 Victor Kugler's Office
- 69 The Front Office of Miep Gies, Jo Kleiman and Bep Voskuijl
- 81 The Storeroom
- 91 The Movable Bookcase
- 97 Otto, Edith and Margot Frank's Room
- 115 Anne Frank and Fritz Pfeffer's Room
- 141 The Bathroom
- 147 Hermann and Auguste van Pels' Room
- 163 Peter van Pels' Room and the Attic

*All the above numbers also refer to specific pages of this book.*

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Anne Frank House  
A Museum with a Story

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Anne Frank House  
Amsterdam

**Anne Frank**  
**House** A Museum  
with a Story

"One day this terrible war will be over. The time will come when we will be people again and not just Jews!"

"We can never be just Dutch, or just English, or whatever, we will always be Jews as well. But then, we'll want to be."

Anne Frank, April 11, 1944



*"One day this terrible war will be over. The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews!"* wrote Anne Frank in her diary on April 11, 1944. With this single sentence, she expressed the essence – as well as the madness – of the Nazi ideology.

The Nazis divided people into two groups: Jews and non-Jews. Being Jewish was biologically determined according to the Nazis and then specifically defined and set down in so-called race laws. They turned German Jews into second-class citizens in their own country: set apart and cast out. Life in Nazi Germany was also dangerous for other people. Germans who disagreed with the politics of their new leaders were the first to be imprisoned in the concentration camps. The disabled were persecuted and murdered by the Nazis. There was also no place for Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, and Jehovah's Witnesses in the Third Reich.

A diagram from this period depicts the triangular fabric badges that prisoners in the concentration camps had to wear: red indicated political prisoners; yellow: Jews; pink: homosexuals; purple: Jehovah's Witnesses; black: people deemed asocial; green: criminals; and blue: emigrants (foreign forced laborers). But these classifications went even further, because combinations were also possible: a Jewish political prisoner or a homosexual Jew.

The consequences of this classification system used by the Nazis and their accomplices were clear when the war ended: millions of victims. Anne Frank was one of those victims; one of the 1.5 million Jewish children who were murdered. And also Anne's mother Edith, her sister Margot, and the others hiding in the Secret Annex with them – Hermann and Auguste van Pels, their son Peter, and Fritz Pfeffer – did not return. Only Anne's father Otto survived the horrors of the camps.

Otto Frank became the heir to his daughter's legacy. He tirelessly dedicated himself to the publication of Anne's diary and the preservation of the hiding place. The first edition of the diary appeared in Dutch in 1947, followed by dozens of other languages in the years thereafter. In 1960, the hiding place was officially opened to the public as a museum: the Anne Frank House. It was Otto Frank's explicit wish that the Secret Annex remain empty, so it was not refurnished. He said in an interview: "During the war everything was taken away and I want to leave it like that." Otto did not want to bend the truth.

The Anne Frank House is a museum with a story. In this catalogue, that story is told in detail based on quotes and objects displayed in the museum. Attention is also given to the traces left behind by the inhabitants of the Secret Annex, such as the images Anne pasted on her bedroom wall and the pencil marks indicating how much Anne and Margot grew during their two years in hiding.

Imaginative powers are required of those who visit the empty Secret Annex. Therefore, to provide an impression of how the rooms looked during the war, this catalogue contains color photos of the hiding place with temporary furnishings. These same photos were used to create the Secret Annex Online: [www.annefrank.org](http://www.annefrank.org), where visitors can also view the furnished spaces. The black & white photos of the building were taken in 1954 by the renowned photographer Maria Austria.

Anne closes her diary entry on April 11 with: *"I know what I want, I have a goal, I have opinions, a religion and love. If only I can be myself. I'll be satisfied. I know that I'm a woman, a woman with inner strength and a great deal of courage! If God lets me live, I'll achieve more than Mother ever did. I'll make my voice heard, I'll go out into the world and work for mankind!"*

Today, people are still being classified, judged, and denounced based on a single aspect of their identity. In many countries, people are still denied the right to be themselves. It is up to those who want to "...go out into the world and work for mankind" to change this situation. This remains of utmost importance.

Ronald Leopold  
*Executive Director Anne Frank House*

## Table of Contents

### 13 A Prior History

- 47 Going into Hiding
- 49 The Warehouse
- 57 The Private Office and the Kitchen
- 63 Victor Kugler's Office
- 69 The Front Office of Miep Gies, Jo Kleiman and Bep Voskuijl
- 81 The Storeroom
- 91 The Movable Bookcase
- 97 Otto, Edith and Margot Frank's Room
- 115 Anne Frank and Fritz Pfeffer's Room
- 141 The Bathroom
- 147 Hermann and Auguste van Pels' Room
- 163 Peter van Pels' Room and the Attic
- 176 The Arrest

### 185 After the Arrest

- 186 The Shoah
- 214 Otto Frank
- 220 Anne Frank's Diaries
- 228 The Publication of the Diary
- 240 The Anne Frank House

### 249 Appendix

- 250 The Pen Names of the People in Hiding and the Helpers
- 251 Photography Credits
- 254 Colophon

## A Prior History





*"My father, the most precious father I've ever seen, didn't marry my mother until he was thirty-six and she was twenty-five. My sister Margot was born in 1926 in Frankfurt am Main in Germany. I followed on June 12, 1929."* (Anne Frank)

Otto Frank and Edith Holländer are married on May 12, 1925, Otto's birthday. The marriage takes place in the synagogue in Aachen. Nine months later, on February 16, 1926, their first daughter Margot Betti is born. Anne(lies) Marie follows on June 12, 1929. The Franks are Jews. Anne's parents feel connected with the Jewish faith yet are not strictly religious. Though Edith visits the synagogue regularly.



1 Otto Frank and Edith Frank-Holländer on their honeymoon in Sanremo (Italy), 1925.

2 Alice Frank-Stern, the mother of Otto Frank, as a hospital volunteer, 1916.



*"I wouldn't go as far as to say that I did not feel like a Jew then. Yet, in one way or another, I was consciously aware of being a German. Otherwise, I certainly wouldn't have become an officer in World War One and I wouldn't have fought for Germany."* (Otto Frank)

Otto Frank identifies with being German and fights for Germany in World War One (1914-1918), just like his brothers Herbert and Robert. Otto is decorated and promoted to the rank of officer. During World War One, his mother works as a volunteer in a military hospital. Also the oldest brother of Edith, Julius Holländer, serves in the German army. He is shot in the arm during the war and is left with a stiff elbow. After the war Otto Frank, together with his younger brother Herbert, manages the family owned bank and the trade in mineral lozenges.

Germany loses World War One. The Peace Treaty of Versailles (1919) requires Germany to pay massive war reparations. The country plunges into an economic and political crisis.

*"I can remember that as early as 1932, groups of storm troopers (Brownshirts) came marching by singing: 'When Jewish blood splatters off the knife.' That made it more than clear to everyone. I immediately discussed it with my wife: 'How can we leave here?', but eventually there is of course the question: How will you be able to support yourself if you go away and give up more or less everything?" (Otto Frank)*

The year that Anne is born, 1929, is marked by a worldwide economic crisis. Germany is hit hard: countless numbers of businesses go bankrupt and millions of people lose their jobs. Also business at the bank owned by the Frank family is continually on the decline. By 1934 the bank will no longer exist. For Anne and Margot Frank the years in Frankfurt are peaceful, they hardly notice the crisis. Anne truly loves the stories her grandmother tells her and often plays with her sister and the children in the neighborhood. Not only Jews live in their neighborhood, but also Catholics and Protestants.

In this climate of crisis the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP or Nazi party) can flourish. This small, extreme-nationalistic political party, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, professes to have the solution to all problems. According to the Nazis, the stipulations of the Peace Treaty of Versailles should be rescinded and the Jews are the ones responsible for the lost war and for the economic and political malaise.

Otto and Edith Frank are seriously concerned about their future in Germany and that of their children.

