

The Holocaust: One Family's Story

The Franks were a typical Jewish family. They lived in a quiet, religiously diverse neighborhood in Frankfurt, Germany. Otto Frank was a successful businessman who had served as an officer in the German Army during World War I. He and his wife had two small daughters, Margot and Anne.

Since losing the war, the German economy was in shambles. By 1933, society had changed drastically for the Jews. The Nazi Party, a political group who hated the Jews, was now in power. Its leader was Adolph Hitler.

Afraid for their future, the Franks fled to Holland. There in Amsterdam, Mr. Frank ran a manufacturing business. After years of German oppression, the Franks were once again able to enjoy freedom.

Then, in the fall of 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland. This sparked the Second World War. The Germans invaded the Netherlands the following spring. Dutch Jews were now required to wear a yellow Star of David and observe strict curfews. They were also forbidden from owning businesses. Margot and Anne were forced to transfer to a segregated Jewish school. Mr. Frank kept control of his company only by signing ownership over to two of his Christian employees.

For many months, the Franks managed to evade the fate of their fellow Jews. But in 1942, Margot was ordered to a Nazi work camp in Germany. The Franks vanished overnight. They and another family went into hiding in a secret annex of rooms behind Mr. Frank's business. For the next two years, two loyal Dutch employees provided food and information about the outside world.

Betrayed by an anonymous tip, the Franks were discovered and shipped to Nazi concentration camps. The men and women were separated, and Mr. Frank never saw his wife or daughters again. Life was horrific in these death camps. Six million Jews died during the Holocaust. Margot and Anne died one day apart, just weeks before Russian soldiers liberated their camp.

Otto Frank was the only member of his family to survive the atrocities. After the war, he returned to Amsterdam and found his daughter Anne's diary, which was later published as "Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl," and has since been published in countless languages and editions.

The secret annex in Amsterdam where the Frank family lived in hiding for two years is now a museum where millions visit each year.