Anne Frank: Biography Of Frank's Family And Circumstances Caused To Write A Diary

Anne Frank was a young Holocaust survivor who provided a vivid glimpse into what life was like living in Nazi occupied Holland through her diary. Frank’s diary is a story of faith, hope and love in the face of hate. Throughout her short lived life a journey like millions of others was shared through a diary she wrote while in hiding. Anne started life normally and simply, but when Hitler came to power everything had changed. Anne was forced into hiding, was put in and died in a concentration camp, she wrote in her diary about her experience up until she was forced into the camp, and to remember what happened to the Jews during the Holocaust. Now to this day her diary entries still inspires people around the world and will never be forgotten.

The Frank family was a typical upper middle class German-Jew family. Anne was born in Frankfurt, Germany and at the age of four moved to Amsterdam, Netherlands when the Nazis gained control of Germany. When Hitler had become chancellor, the Franks immediately decided it was time to flee. On September 1, 1939 Nazi Germany invaded Poland igniting a global conflict which quickly turned into World War II. About a year later in October of 1940, Anne and her sister Margot were forced to transfer to a segregated Jewish school. “After May 1940, the good times were few and far between; first there was war, then the capitulation, and then the arrival of the Germans, which is when the trouble started for the Jews.”-Anne Frank.

On July sixth of 1942 the Franks went into hiding in a concealed room behind a bookcase in the building where Anne’s father, Otto Frank, had worked after persecutions of the Jewish population increased and Anne’s sister, Margot was faced with deportation to a supposed forced-labor camp. To avoid detection, the family left a false trail suggesting they’d fled to Switzerland. In the secret annex, the Franks were joined by Otto's business associate Herman Van Pels, along with his wife Auguste and their son Peter who were also Jewish. A small group of Otto Frank’s employees had risked their own lives to smuggle food, supplies and news of the outside world into the secret annex. Through the days they had to be quiet because if they were to be caught the consequences would not be good. Anne passed time by writing her observations and feelings in a diary she had gotten for her thirteenth birthday. The family spent two years in hiding without ever stepping foot outside of the dark, damp portion of the building. On August fourth of 1944, after twenty five months in hiding, Anne Frank and seven others were discovered by the Gestapo also known as the German secret state police, who had learned about the hiding place from an anonymous tipster who has never to this day been definitely identified.

Following their arrest, the Franks were transported to concentration camps. First, they were sent to a holding camp in northern Netherlands (Westerbork) by the Gestapo. From the holding camp, the group was transported by freight train to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination and concentration camp complex in German-occupied Poland. Anne and her sister Margot were spared immediate death in the Auschwitz gas chambers and instead on October of 1944 they were transferred to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in northern Germany. About five months later in March of 1945 Anne and Margot died of typhus at Bergen-Belsen and were thrown into a mass grave. Only one month after their death on April 25, 1945, forces liberated the camp.

During Anne’s time in the secret annex, Anne wrote out her feeling and observations and questions to keep her sanity. She addressed her diary entries to an imaginary friend she called Kitty. She also wrote about life in hiding, including her impressions of the other inhabitants of the secret annex, her feelings of loneliness and her frustration over the lack of privacy. “I’ve reached the point where I hardly care whether I live or die.”-Anne Frank(2-3-1944). “It’s utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering, and death.”-Anne Frank(7-15-1944). Anne displayed keen insight and maturity when she wrote about the war, humanity, and her identity. On the side Anne also wrote a few short stories and essays during the time hiding.” Anne had been inspired to edit her diary for posterity after hearing a March 1944 radio broadcast from an exiled Dutch governmental official who urged the Dutch people to keep journals and letters that would provide a record of what life was like under the Nazis.”(history.com). Though the time in the annex was hard for Anne she never lost her hope. “I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness; I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too. I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more.”-Anne Frank.

Otto Frank, Anne’s father was the only survivor of the family. When Otto Frank returned to Amsterdam following his release from Auschwitz, Miep Gies gave him five notebooks and about three hundred loose papers containing Anne’s writings. Gies recovered her writing materials from the secret annex shortly after the Franks arrest by the Nazis and had hidden them in her desk. After his daughter, Anne’s writings were returned to him, Otto Frank helped compile them into a manuscript that was published in the Netherlands in 1947. “Although U.S. publishers initially rejected the work as too depressing and dull, it was eventually published in America in 1952 as ‘The Diary of a Young Girl’.”(history.com).

“The Diary of a Young girl” was published in over 60 languages. On June 25, 1947, Anne Frank's 'Het Achterhuis’ (‘The Secret Annex’) was published in Dutch in a small edition of 3,036 copies. After the success of the Dutch copy of the book, Otto Frank found publishers in West Germany and in France willing to publish “The Secret Annex”. In 1950, both translations were published. A first edition of 4,600 copies was printed in Germany, but the book was not a bestseller. “When ‘Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank’ (‘The Diary of Anne Frank’) was published as a cheap pocket in 1955, it became a hit. When the play was also a success in the Federal Republic of Germany, a total of 700,000 copies were printed. The success of the play led to the publication of an edition in the GDR (East Germany) in 1957.” (https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/diary/how-did-annes-diary-become-so-famous/). “The Diary of a Young Girl” remains one of the most moving and widely read first hand accounts of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust.

Anne Frank’s house was supposed to be knocked down but people wanted to preserve it and today it is one of the most popular museums in Amsterdam. In 1957, the Anne Frank Foundation was established to protect the property from developers who wanted to demolish the block. The museum opened on May 3, 1960. “The museum preserves the hiding place, has a permanent exhibition on the life and times of Anne Frank, and has an exhibition space about all forms of persecution and discrimination. In 2013 and 2014, the museum had 1.2 million visitors and was the 3rd most visited museum in the Netherlands.” (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Frank_House). Shortly after the book was published, visitors were shown around by the employees who had hidden the families and could see the secret rooms. By 1955, the company had moved and the entire block, which the building

belonged to was sold to a single estate agent who wanted to knock down the building and build a factory on the space. A campaign to save the building and to list it as a protected monument was started by the Dutch paper “Het Vrije Volk” on November 23, 1955. The building was saved by campaigners who staged a protest outside the building on the day of demolition. “The former hiding place of Anne Frank attracted a huge amount of interest, especially as translations and dramatisations of the Diary had made her a figure known throughout the world. Over 9,000 visitors came in its first year. In a decade, there were twice as many. Over the years, the building has had to be renovated to manage such a large number of visitors.” (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Frank_House).

Anne Frank’s story and legacy has made a mark on this world by letting people around the world see what struggles and hardships she went through in her diary. Anne Frank died at the age of fifteen because she was a Jewish girl during the time of the Holocaust. For all the survivors out there, her story shows you that you weren’t alone. For all the deniers out there, her story shows you that it was real. For all the people who never knew about the Holocaust, her story shows you that this can happen. The Holocaust was a tragedy, but Anne Frank’s story will continue to inspire and teach for many more generations.