

The Anne Frank House

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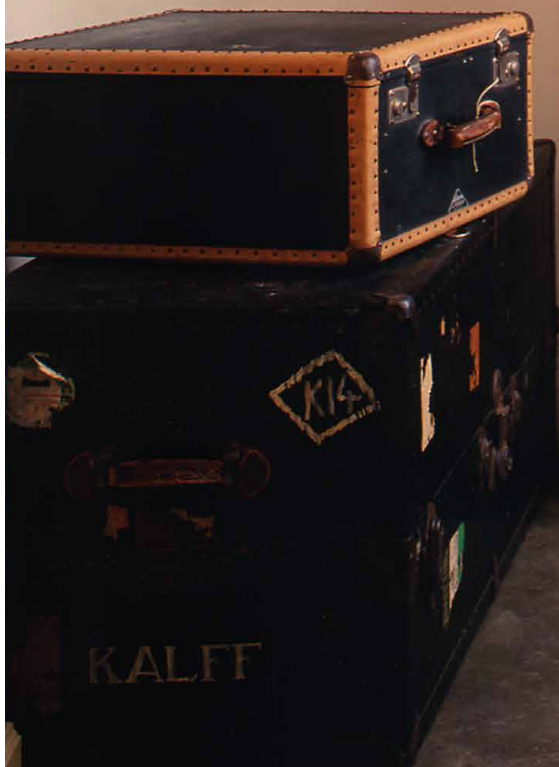
The helpers of the hidiers

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The **ten** most frequently asked questions about the **Secret Annex**

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A cross-section of the **Prinsengracht 263**





A perfect hiding place

The 1942 summer holiday had just started. Anne Frank was in the first year of the Jewish Lyceum in Amsterdam. She had moved up and was happy with her report, having received only one unsatisfactory mark. On Sunday 5 July, she was relaxing in the sun on the roof terrace when the doorbell rang...

Anne's mother opened the door to a police officer who was delivering a special postcard stating that Margot, Anne's older sister, was to present herself to go off to work in Nazi Germany. The card did not come as a surprise because there were numerous rumours that this might happen. On that same Sunday, about 1,000 Jews in Amsterdam received a similar card.

2

GOING INTO HIDING

Anne's parents were well-prepared and did not trust the Nazis at all. Margot would not present herself; instead the entire family would go into hiding. Their shelter was almost ready. Two floors had been furnished and stocked with food in the Secret Annex - an empty part of a building owned by Anne's father Otto Frank's company.

OPEKTA AND PECTACON

Otto Frank's company was located at the Prinsengracht, in the centre of Amsterdam. It actually consisted of two companies: Opekta and Pectacon. Opekta sold an ingredient for preparing homemade jam; Pectacon sold meat and sausage seasoning. Miep Gies, Victor Kugler, Johannes Kleiman, Hermann van Pels and Bep Voskuijl worked in the office. Hermann van Pels was also Jewish. In addition, a few men worked in the warehouse.

FURNITURE AND FOOD

In the spring of 1942, Otto Frank and Hermann van Pels decided to furnish a hiding place. Johannes Kleiman and his brother Willy helped them and together they took as much furniture and food to the Secret Annex as possible.

SEVERE PUNISHMENTS

Otto also asked Victor, Miep and Bep if they would be willing to help them if the families were to go into hiding and they all immediately agreed. The helpers realised that their own life was at risk because there were severe penalties for helping Jews; the men in the warehouse and the neighbours were not to know anything about it.

ANNE'S DIARY

And then there was the call on 5 July. Early next morning, the family left to their hiding place. Anne brought a bag with textbooks, a few old letters and her diary.

EIGHT HIDERS

One week later, the Van Pels family joined them: Hermann and Auguste and their son Peter. In late 1942, Miep told them that Fritz Pfeffer, Miep's dentist and an acquaintance of the Frank family, was looking for a hiding place. On 16 November 1942, he also went into hiding in the Secret Annex.

A PERFECT HIDING PLACE

Anne referred to the hiding place as 'perfect' in her diary. According to her, there was no other place in the Netherlands like it for hidiers. But the eight hidiers had no idea how long their stay would be.



8 hid ers

OTTO FRANK
EDITH FRANK
HERMANN VAN PELS
AUGUSTE VAN PELS

MARGOT FRANK
ANNE FRANK
PETER VAN PELS
FRITZ PFEFFER



THE DIARY ANNE GOT
FOR HER THIRTEENTH
BIRTHDAY.



EDITH FRANK WITH ANNE, 13 JUNE 1929.

What happened before all this...

Anne Frank was born on 12 June 1929 and lived with her father, mother and sister Margot in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany. The Frank family was Jewish. In 1933, Adolf Hitler and his party came into power. Hitler and his supporters (Nazis) were anti-Semitic and hated Jews. Jews were increasingly discriminated against and Anne's parents, Otto and Edith Frank, decided to move to Amsterdam that very year. They felt safe in the Netherlands.

On 10 May 1940, German forces invaded the Netherlands and war broke out. The Dutch army was forced to give up the fight after five days and the German army occupied the Netherlands. Jews were discriminated against and persecuted here also: the Nazis forbade them to visit swimming pools, cinemas, libraries and many other public places. After the 1941 summer holiday, all Jews had to go to Jewish-only schools and from May 1942, the occupiers forced every Jew in the Netherlands older than 6 to wear a yellow star stating the word 'Jew' on their clothing.

On 12 June 1942, Anne received a diary from her mother and father for her thirteenth birthday. She was very happy with it, but a few weeks later, life as she knew it was over...

28,000 hid ers

During the Second World War, about 28,000 Jewish men, women and children in the Netherlands succeeded in finding a hiding place. Families seldom remained together and parents were often separated from their children. In many cases, siblings went into hiding at different locations. Some of them received a false name and they could go to school and play outside as if they were not Jewish. Hiders often moved around to other places after short periods of time; many of them had to relocate to another hiding place frequently because of the danger of being betrayed. Hiding places were usually much smaller than the Secret Annex, in some cases not even bigger than a crawl space. The Nazis deported a total of 107,000 Jewish men, women and children from the Netherlands to the concentration camps. Only 5,000 survived.





VIKTOR KUGLER, BEP VOSKUIJL AND MIEP GIES (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) IN THE OFFICE AT THE CANAL SIDE OF THE HOUSE, 1941. THE GIRLS IN THE BACK NO LONGER WORKED THERE WHEN THE FRANK FAMILY WENT INTO HIDING. ABOVE: THE OFFICE TEMPORARILY FURNISHED FOR A FILM SET.

‘We, the helpers, knew that we all had problems with the situation from time to time, but we never spoke about it. Everything had to go smoothly and talking about things would only put pressure on us. It would cause us to think about the persons in hiding all day long and we had to prevent that. We had to appear as relaxed as possible to the outside world, or people might get suspicious.’

Miep Gies
in an interview
in 1998.



Betrayed!

Friday 4 August 1944 seemed a day like any other in the Secret Annex. It was Anne's 761st day in the hiding place. The hidiers were quietly working when suddenly, Dutch police officers came in. Karl Josef Silberbauer, an Austrian member of the SS, was in charge. The hidiers had been betrayed. They were arrested and forced to hand over their jewellery and other valuables. The SS man carelessly shook out a briefcase to put the things in it. It was the briefcase in which Anne kept her diary papers... and they all fell to the ground.

The hidiers were arrested and Johannes Kleiman and Victor Kugler were also taken because they helped the Jews. Miep and Bep were left alone. After the truck with the prisoners had left, they returned to the hiding place to collect as many of the hidiers' belongings as possible. A few days later, the Dutch company Puls emptied the entire Secret Annex by order of the Nazis. Anything usable was transported to Germany.





Every year, about one million people from all over the world visit the Anne Frank House. What are the ten most frequently asked questions about the hiders, the helpers and the Secret Annex?



THE ROOM OF ANNE FRANK AND FRITZ PFEFFER, TEMPORARILY FURNISHED FOR A FILM SET.

The 10 asked about the

1 WHO MADE THE BOOKCASE THAT HID THE ENTRANCE TO THE HIDING PLACE?

The bookcase was made in August 1942 by Johan Voskuijl, Bep's father, who worked in the warehouse. He did not know anything about the hiders at first, but they confided in him later.

2 WHY DID FRITZ PFEFFER HAVE TO SHARE A ROOM WITH ANNE?

In an interview, Miep Gies later said: 'It was an emergency situation and we didn't give it any further thought'. In addition, there was no other place available and Anne was still considered a child, unlike Margot.

3 WHEN STANDING IN FRONT OF PRINSENGRACHT 263, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE THE SECRET ANNEX, BUT IT IS VISIBLE FROM THE COURTYARD AND FROM THE WESTERTOREN. WHY WERE THE HIDERS NOT DISCOVERED SOONER?

The Nazis held major raids in order to track Jews; they closed off entire streets or neighbourhoods and would go from house to house to arrest Jewish occupants. But the Nazis held hardly any raids in the centre of Amsterdam. From late 1943, the raids occurred less often because most Jewish people living in the Netherlands had already been transported to the concentration camps via Westerbork.

4 WHAT DID THE HIDERS DO DURING THE DAY?

The hiders were usually very quiet during the day and read, study or did household chores. The most dangerous hours were between 8.30 and 9.00 am, when the employees in the warehouse were already working. They were not to notice anything, so the hiders had to wait until 9.00 am when the helpers came in before they could use the bathroom, for instance. When the warehouse employees went home for lunch, the hiders could heave a sigh of relief. One of the helpers would come in, join the meal and bring the latest news from the city. After lunch, everyone had to be as quiet as possible again until the evening, when all of the warehouse employees would go home.

5 HOW WAS ANNE FRANK'S DIARY PRESERVED?

After the arrest, Miep and Bep went to the hiding place and saw Anne's diaries, notebooks and notes lying on the floor. Miep put everything in a drawer of her desk with the intention of returning it to Anne after the war. When Otto told her that Anne had died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, Miep gave the notebooks to him.





THE MODELS OTTO FRANK HAD MADE IN 1960 PROVIDE A GOOD IMPRESSION OF THE DESIGN OF THE HIDING PLACE.

most frequently questions Secret Annex

Why isn't there any furniture in the Secret Annex?

6

Shortly after the museum opened its doors in 1960, Otto Frank had special models made to provide visitors with an impression of the design of the Secret Annex. In an interview, he said: "After the Anne Frank House was renovated, I was asked whether the rooms had to be refurnished, but I said no. During the war [after the arrest – ed.] everything was removed and I want to keep it that way. But after the opening of the house, people indicated that the rooms were very spacious. I answered that they had a faulty impression and said: 'Don't forget the unbearable and unending tension...'"

When did Otto Frank die?

7

Otto Frank reached the age of 91; he was born on 12 May 1889 in Frankfurt am Main and died on 19 August 1980.

What happened to the hiders and the two helpers after their arrest?

8

The eight hiders were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau via Doorgangskamp Westerbork and died there or someplace else after subsequent transports. Otto Frank was the only one to survive the persecution of the Jews. Johannes Kleiman was imprisoned in the Amersfoort camp and was released after a while. In 1945, Victor Kugler escaped from a train that was on its way to Germany.

What happened to the police officers who arrested the hiders?

9

Karl Joseph Silberbauer, the SS man in charge of the raid, was tracked down by Simon Wiesenthal in 1963 in Vienna, where he worked for the police. He was suspended, but was later allowed to go back to work. He died in 1972. Two Dutch officers, Gezinus Gringhuis and Willem Grootendorst, received long prison sentences for what they had done as 'Jew hunters' during the war. The arrest of the hiders in the Secret Annex was not of particular significance in this. Grootendorst died in 1973 and Gringhuis in 1975.

Who betrayed the hiders?

10

A few investigations took place after the war and there were suspects, but no evidence was ever found and it remains unknown who did it.

For more information, go to: www.annefrank.org/nl/betrayal





Prinsengracht 263

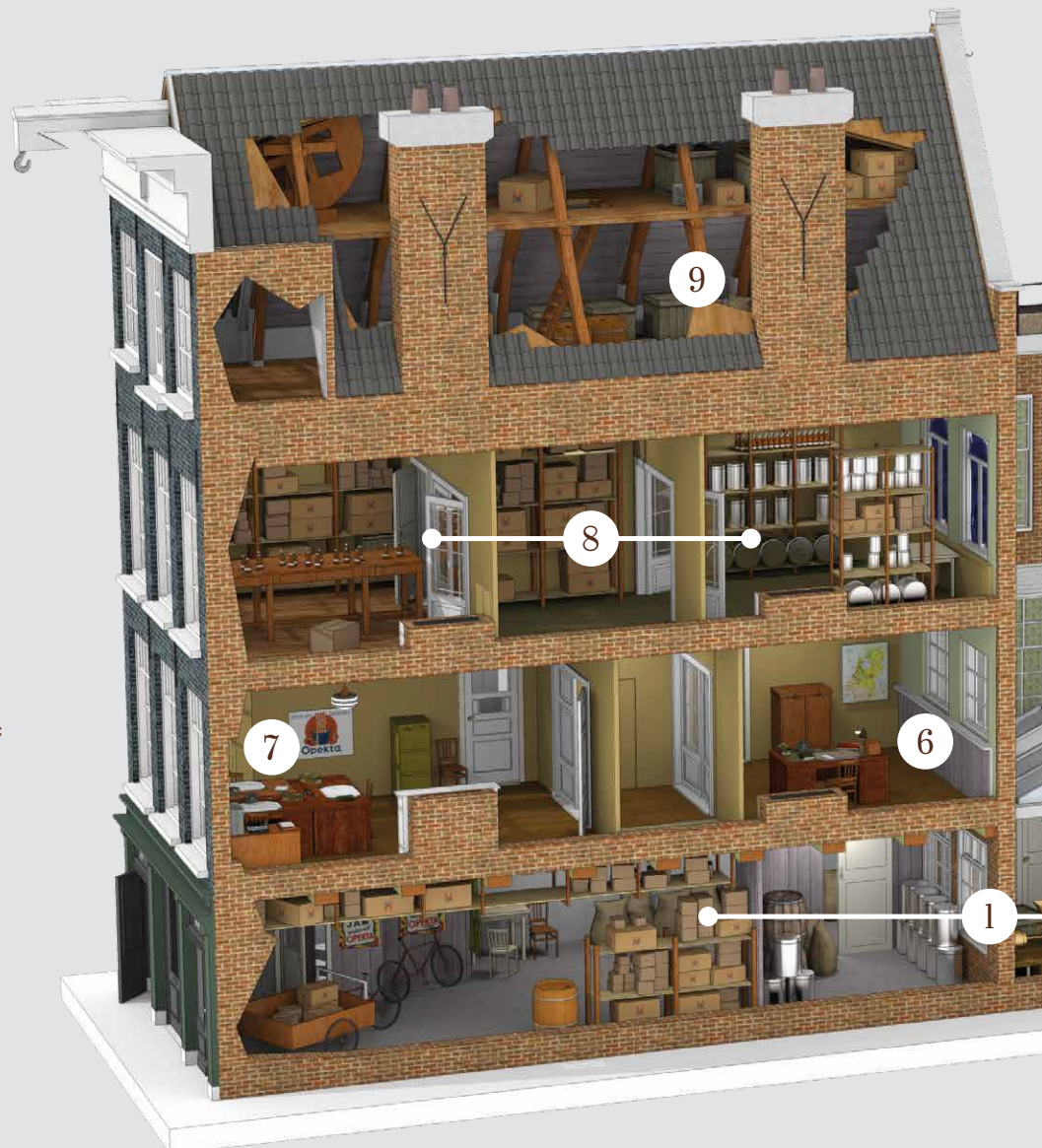
This section shows the Prinsengracht 263 with furniture like it was when occupied by those in hiding. Today, the Annex isn't furnished (see question 6 on page 7), but the models provided by Otto Frank give a good idea and Anne described the canalside of the house and the annex in her diary. There are even floor plans that were retained! Thanks to this information, we now know what the building looked like at that time, and the historical model is based on this knowledge. A few renovations took place later, as a result of which some of the doors, walls and windows are no longer in their original location.

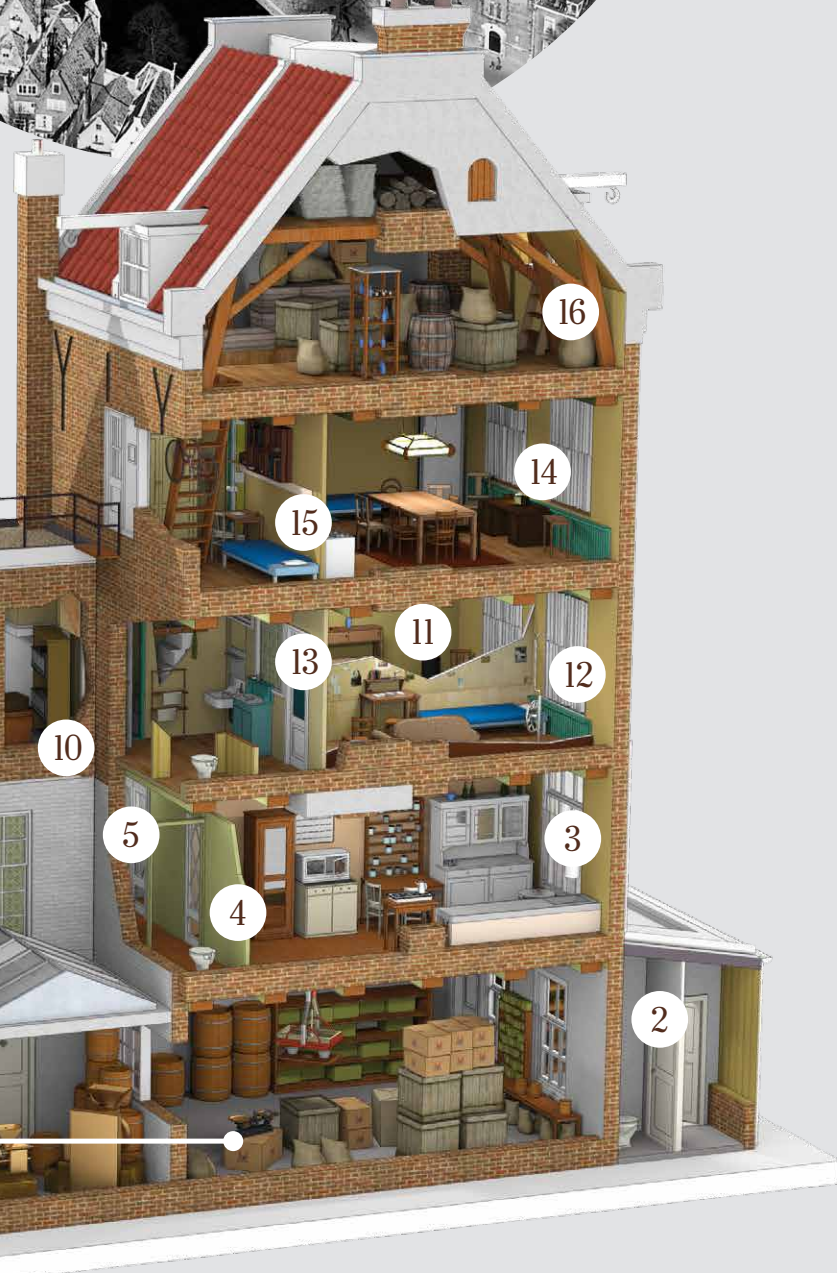


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- 1 Warehouse
- 2 Warehouse bathroom
- 3 Office kitchen
- 4 Office bathroom
- 5 Door to executive office
- 6 Victor Kugler's office
- 7 Office of Miep Gies, Johannes Kleiman and Bep Voskuijl
- 8 Storage rooms
- 9 Canal side of the house attic
- 10 The bookcase
- 11 Room of Otto, Edith and Margot Frank
- 12 Room of Anne Frank and Fritz Pfeffer
- 13 Washroom
- 14 Room of Hermann and Auguste van Pels
- 15 Room of Peter van Pels
- 16 Secret Annex attic





Want to know more?

THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL

Anne's diaries are available in an edition compiled and edited by Otto Frank and later by Mirjam Pressler, and known in the Netherlands under the title Anne came up with: *The Secret Annex* (*Het Achterhuis*). English edition: Penguin Puffin, ISBN 9780141315188

THE SECRET ANNEX ONLINE

On this educational website, the Anne Frank House provides an impression of the hiding place as it was during the war.

Go to www.annefrank.org/

WHO WAS WHO IN AND AROUND THE SECRET ANNEX?

A further acquaintance with the thirteen people – the hidiers and helpers – we will never forget because of Anne Frank's diary.

Ordering via www.annefrank.org/shop

OUTSIDE IT'S WAR

Anne Frank and her world

By Janny van der Molen, with drawings by Martijn van der Linden.

In collaboration with the Anne Frank House, Uitgeverij Ploegsma developed a book about Anne Frank for children eight years and up. It provides an image of Anne's life using short stories.

ISBN 978 90 216 7245 8

ANNE FRANK

The graphic biography

By Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colón.

This graphic biography for readers aged 14 years and up starts with the life of Anne Frank's parents – Otto en Edith – and the first years of the sisters Anne and Margot in Frankfurt. The biography ends with the publication of Anne's diary texts and the opening of the Anne Frank House. US edition: Hill & Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus & Giroux

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COLOPHON

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