

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

Chocolate, The Taste of Freedom



The Memoir of a Hidden Child

by

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and

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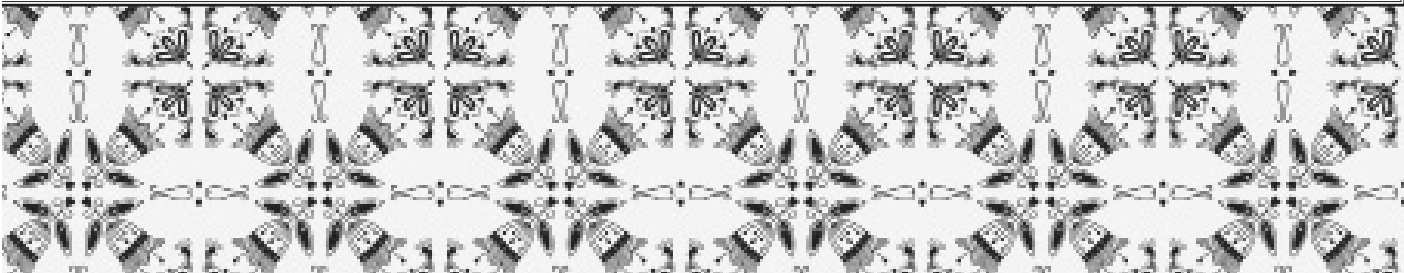
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May the story of Maud Dahme’s memoir compel you.
May the message that she shares with others remain alive in you.
May you seek to care for and respect others.
May you move out of your comfort zone, take a risk and be an upstander.
May you look beyond differences and see that we are all human.

Kathy Tabasso

About the Author . . . Maud Dahme

Chocolate, The Taste of Freedom tells the story of a six-year-old Dutch girl who must leave the comfort of her family and home to find help and safety in the arms of strangers. As a young victim of the **Holocaust** her only hope for survival was as a “**hidden child**.” This captivating story reveals how young Maud Dahme was hidden from the **Nazis** and saved from the **death camps** by various Christian **upstanders** who risked their lives by doing so.

In this memoir, Maud reveals the events, the trauma, and the people involved in those years of hiding for her life in the Netherlands. You will learn of her personal resilience and her tremendous courage in the midst of great difficulty and emotional struggle. Finally you will see how this young girl grew into a woman of virtue and strength conquering evil with great good.

About the Title . . . Chocolate, The Taste of Freedom

*“We were joyful! After five years, on April 19, 1945, we were liberated. Such joy!
To suddenly realize that we were free.”*

What does freedom “taste” like? Maud Dahme remembers that freedom came the wonderful day her village was liberated from the Germans and kind soldiers were throwing chocolate bars out to the ecstatic waiting crowd. For Maud, freedom day tasted like chocolate!

Maud explains that when the Allied soldiers rolled in their tanks into her village and tossed out the chocolate bars she did not exactly know what they were at first. She did not want to accept the chocolate bars because she had never before had sweets or chocolate. But after some helpful encouragement she tried some chocolate and remembers its first sweet taste . . . and to her that sweetness is remembered as the taste of freedom.

About the Memoir

The Story Begins

Maud explains how her parents, who were from two different countries, met each other. Maud’s mother, Lilli Eschwege, was from Germany and had traveled to the Netherlands for the Jewish holidays, where she met Hartog Jacob Henri Peper from the Netherlands. Lilli and “Harry” Peper married in 1935 and then moved to Amersfoort, an ancient Dutch city in central Netherlands.

Maud was born on January 24, 1936. Her sister, Rita was born February 23, 1938. Maud does not remember too much of her childhood before the German invasion of the Netherlands in 1940. At that time of the invasion Maud was four years old and Rita was two.

The War Begins

On May 10, 1940, the Germans attacked the Low Countries – the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. This surprised the Netherlands who had declared neutrality at the outbreak of World War II. The German blitzkrieg devastated the Dutch army and the Dutch government surrendered after only four days of war.

The Netherlands suffered under German occupation. They endured political repression as well as abuse. Dutch workers were forced from their jobs to labor in German factories. Dutch Jews were rounded up and sent to labor and **concentration camps**.

Maud says, “*I remember the bombings and remember going down to the root cellar with my parents for safety. I also remember the soldiers.*” The city of Amersfoort was the largest **garrison** town in the Netherlands. After surrender to the Germans, one of the first things the Germans did was register all the Jews in Amersfoort.

Maud’s German Jewish grandparents joined her family in Amersfoort in 1939 because they felt it was safer for them in the Netherlands than in Germany.

The Restrictions

Germans placed many restrictions on the Jews of Amersfoort. There were signs in the parks and restaurants forbidding Jewish entry. Jews had to carry identity cards stamped with a “J.” Licenses for driving and fishing were removed. Bikes were taken away. Jews were prohibited from using public transportation. Everyone had to turn in their radios. Jewish housewives could only shop during certain hours and in certain stores.

Jewish children could not go to school anymore. So some Jewish teachers set up schools just for Jewish children. Even more restrictions followed. Jews could not be patients in Dutch hospitals. Within months Jews were forbidden to associate with non-Jews. Maud could no longer visit her non-Jewish friends.

By May 3, 1942, anyone over the age of six had to wear the Jewish star with the word *Jood* written in the center. Maud writes, “*My mother had to buy the stars. I was thrilled because I was old enough to wear a star, and I was proud of it . . . I thought wearing a star was a sign of being a grown up.*”

The Deportations

On August 16, 1942, a letter ordered all Jewish males between the ages of 18 and 45 to report for forced labor in Germany – *Arbeitseinsatz*. The letter told young men that they were going to work camps. On the day the men left, Maud states, “*Amersfoort citizens stood along the streets crying; they were so moved by these **deportations** of people they had known for years.*”

All other Jews were to be evacuated from Amersfoort to Amsterdam on August 21, 1942. There were only one hundred and twenty Jews left – the old and infirm as well as those married to Christians. Some Jews decided to go into hiding. On April 13, 1943, the Germans ordered that the town of Amersfoort be completely *Judenrein* (free of Jews) in just two days, by April 15, 1943.

A letter was sent to the Jews telling them the details of the German plans for their resettlement in the East. The letter stated that they should bring money and jewelry. The letter reminded them not to worry about their homes. They were told that the Germans would watch over their houses until they returned. Maud remembers, “*Of course after we left, the Germans took all our belongings.*”

By May 1943 all the remaining Jews had been taken from Amersfoort to **Westerbork Transit Camp** in northeastern Netherlands. That summer they were deported from **Westerbork** to **Sobibor** Death Camp in eastern Poland. Maud states: “*The butcher and his wife were deported, and on their journey to **Sobibor**, they threw a postcard out of the train with the message ‘whoever finds this mail it.’ They were murdered in **Sobibor** with the other Amersfoort Jews.*”

Maud lost many family members at the **Sobibor** death camp including her Aunt Miep and Uncle Solomon and their three children. She also lost her Dutch grandfather, Wolf, and her German grandparents, Simon and Meta. While all this was going on, her grandmother, Rebekka, had a heart attack and later died in the hospital.

The Rescue

Soon after Maud’s parents heard about the resettlement letter for Jews to go the East, they stopped by a non-Jewish friend’s home. They had to sneak into the home because **Nazi** restrictions prohibited Jews visiting non-Jews. Maud’s parents were surprised to find a copy of the same resettlement letter there and thus discovered that their friend, Mr. Kees van Zwol, was a member of the **Dutch Underground**. He strongly advised Maud’s family not to leave Amersfoort on the train. He went on to tell them that Dutch Christians were willing to hide Jewish children.

He went on to explain that being hidden meant that the Underground would tell them who the children would be hidden with or where they would be hidden. This is because if they, the parents, were caught and tortured they could not reveal anything about where their children were hidden. A decision about whether or not they would allow their daughters to go into hiding had to be made within hours.

The decision was made to begin the rescue process for the girls. Young Maud and Rita were left with the Jan Kanis family in July 1942. Maud recalls “*My parents told us that we were going on a vacation to a farm for several weeks. They told us that they also were*

going on a vacation and when they came back they would pick us up.” Taking off their **yellow stars**, Maud and Rita left with Jan Kanis in the middle of the night. “*I remember walking through the woods and picking blueberries that were growing wild on the ground.*” By daylight the girls reached the next town where they took a train to a farm where they would be hidden.

The Spronks

Jan Kanis left Maud and Rita on a farm in the town of Oldebroek with Mr. and Mrs. Spronk who were in their sixties. The girls called the Spronks Aunt and Uncle or *Omh* and *Tante*. Mrs. Spronk became known to them as *Tannie* because young Rita could not pronounce *Tante*.

Daily life for the girls on the Spronks’ farm was difficult as the area was poor and underdeveloped. There was no running water or toilet. They used an outhouse instead. On the first day at the farm Maud and Rita had to hide in the wheat field because German soldiers were walking around looking for Jews.

The New Identities

During the first night on the farm the Spronks told Maud and Rita that they must have new names. They would now be Margje and Rika Spronk. Maud writes, “*They said that this is your story and you must remember it, ‘. . .You are no longer Jewish. You are now Christian. You must remember this!’* Maud goes on to reveal the depth of her fear, “*Our story was drilled into me every single day. I lived in constant fear; I was scared to death, knowing that if I messed up, we would be taken away.*”

The girls could not go to school in case one of their classmates whose parents might be **Dutch Nazis** found out the truth about them. They had to pretend that they were the Spronks’ nieces who were bombed out of the city and were living with them on the farm because they were homeless. Maud remained in the Spronk house most of the time because German soldiers were often walking around their neighborhood.

Sundays were church days as the Spronks were deeply religious. Maud remembers that they read the Bible every night and went to church every Sunday. This had a lasting effect on her Jewish faith. Maud writes, “*We began to forget the Jewish religion. At the time, I knew that Rita and I were Jewish, and I knew that Jews were being hidden. By the end of the war, I remembered nothing about Judaism.*”

Farm Life

Maud did new and interesting things on the farm that she would never have done in the city. The girls helped the Spronks with chores on the farm. During the wheat harvest they would help cutting and stacking the wheat. Then they would put the wheat on carts and take it to the windmill in town where it was made into flour.

Maud also collected aluminum foil from the meadows and wheat fields that had been dropped from German planes on bombing missions. The deposited foil upset the cows and the farmers. Maud was also taught to spin wool sheared from the sheep and then knit it into underpants.

Maud did not have toys on the farm. Instead, she played with spent ammunition she found on the ground from the planes that had been shot down. She collected her “toy” ammunition on a shelf in the barn.

The Move to Elburg

When Maud was almost nine years old, the **Dutch Underground** moved her and Rita away from the farm for safety. They were moved to Elburg, a medieval fishing village, and stayed with the Westerink family. Once again the girls had to change their names and their story. Maud’s name was changed to Marie Hoogendoorn.

There was very little to eat; the whole town was starving. Maud remembers always being hungry. Mr. Westerink was a fisherman, so they survived eating the eel he caught. She made small fires and put sticks through little fish and bugs and roasted them. There was no school, so they played outside a lot. The Westerinks had a twenty–year-old daughter, Jo, who became very close to the girls and thought of them as her little sisters.

The Taste of Freedom

After five years as a **hidden child**, on April 19, 1945, Maud’s town of Elburg was liberated. **Dutch Underground** fighters led victorious Canadians and **Allies** into the village. Maud relates, “*Such joy! To suddenly realize that we were free.*”

In celebration, soldiers were tossing out chocolate bars to the happy crowd. Maud did not want to accept one because she did not know anything about these unusual things. After a taste she liked it and recalls, “*To this day I love chocolate. It is the taste of freedom.*” By May 5, 1945, all of the Netherlands had been liberated.

Reunion and Rebuilding

When Maud and Rita returned to Oldebroek, they were reunited with their parents. But the girls could not remember much about them. In fact, Maud did not even recognize her parents. This was a difficult adjustment period for all of the family. Tannie would miss the girls and be all alone without them. Maud did not want to go home with her parents at first.

The family returned home to Amersfoort and lived in their grandparents’ house from 1945 to 1948. The house was in a terrible condition because a bomb had fallen on it. Soon the girls began school. Eventually, Maud and Rita were sponsored by the Canadian Red Cross to travel out of the country. This trip would help combat their serious malnutrition.

Immigration

Maud had American relatives who sponsored her family for a move to America. They immigrated to America on the *MS Westerdam* on April 14, 1950. The girls did not know English, but during the voyage their father told them that they had to learn all the states and their capitals. They disembarked at a pier in Hoboken, New Jersey, ten days later where the relatives who sponsored them were there to welcome the family.

Life in America

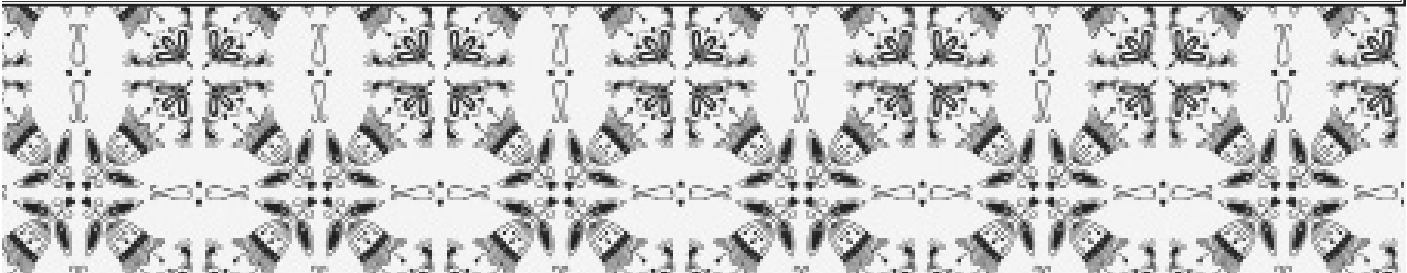
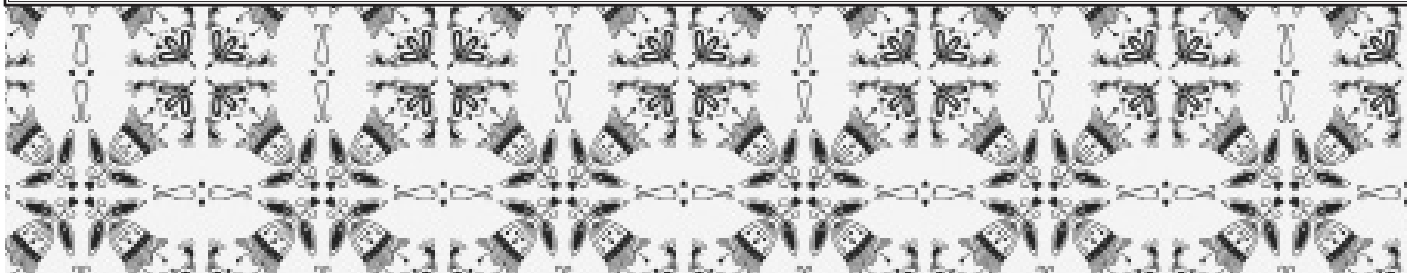
The family eventually settled into an apartment in Queens, New York, and the girls started school. Maud made great strides in America. She graduated from school at age eighteen and worked for Pan American World Airways. Maud met her future husband, Hans Dahme, while at Pan American Airways. He was a pilot with a great entrepreneurial spirit. Maud and Hans had four children.

Life of Educating Youth

Initially, Maud was reluctant to speak about her past; however she came to realize the importance of witnessing to others about her **Holocaust** experience. “*For a long time, I couldn’t talk about my experiences; I was silent. However, sharing my story has helped me to become the person I am today.*”

In 1982 she became a member of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education. She now serves as a volunteer speaker relating her memories of the **Holocaust** because she wants to ensure that the lessons of the **Holocaust** are remembered. *The message I try to stress when I speak and write is love and caring – not hatred...I also speak of forgiveness. We need to forgive in order to live.*”

Photographs



The Historical Context

To best understand Maud’s experiences during the **Holocaust**, it is important to review the rise of Nazism in Germany and its expansion throughout Europe in the 1930s and during the subsequent war years, 1939-45.

How the Nazis Came to Power

The Era of the Weimar Republic 1919-1933

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES 1918-1919

The Treaty of Versailles set the terms for peace in Europe after World War I. The victorious Allied Powers excluded Germany from negotiations. In the treaty the Allied placed sole responsibility for World War I on Germany and stripped Germany of her colonies and valuable European territories. Germany also had to pay reparations for civilian damages incurred during the war. Germans of many different backgrounds expressed dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles. Not only did they feel that Jews, Communists, and political dissidents had “stabbed Germany in the back,” but they also regarded the democratic Weimar Republic as a form of government alien to German tradition.

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

After the **Allies** defeated Germany in 1918, the Kaiser fled to the Netherlands for asylum while a group of democratic politicians in Berlin proclaimed the establishment of the Weimar Republic to replace the imperial government. The president of the new republic was Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934), a Field Marshall during World War I.

The National Socialist German Workers’ Party, that came to be known as the **Nazis**, was one of scores of Weimar political parties that criticized the Republic for agreeing to sign the Versailles Treaty. Adolf Hitler, born in Austria in 1889 and a soldier in the German army during World War I, became leader, or Führer, of the **Nazi** Party in 1921. Hitler and the **Nazi** Party blamed Jews and political radicals for the weakened state of Germany.

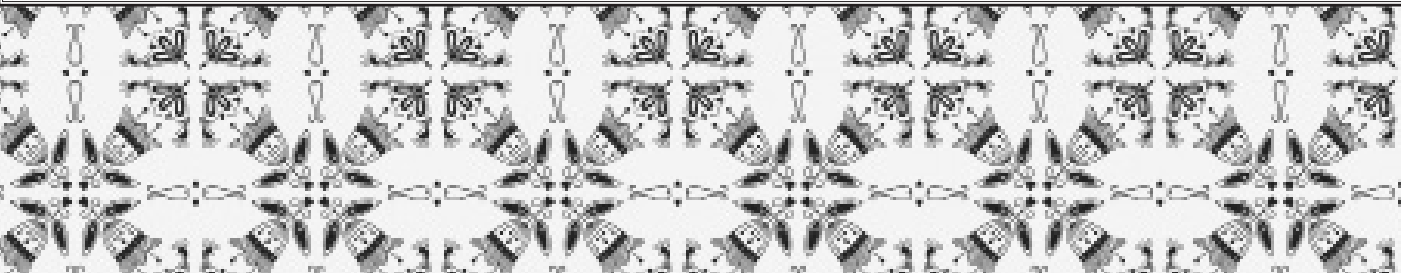
From the **Nazi** perspective, the creation of a master race of Germans □ “Aryans” □ required the elimination of Jews. Despite the fact that Jews had contributed to German culture and professions and that thousands of Jewish males had served the Fatherland in World War I, the **Nazis** cited Jews as the main cause of the degeneration of German vitality and creativity. According to the **Nazis**, as long as Jews remained in Germany, they threatened to “infect” the master race. Other groups that the **Nazis** considered threatening to the purity of the Aryan nation were the mentally and physically handicapped, Gypsies (Roma and Sinti), homosexuals, Slavic peoples, Jehovah’s Witnesses, people of African descent (especially African Germans), and political dissidents.

During the Weimar Republic, the **Nazis** gained support primarily in the southern German state of Bavaria. Between 1924 and 1929, when the German economy began to prosper, the majority of Germans regarded **Nazis** as thugs. However, with the onset of the worldwide Depression in 1929, greater numbers of Germans began listening to the **Nazi** message.

THE EARLY YEARS OF NAZISM IN POWER (1933-9)

On January 20, 1922, Hitler was appointed Chancellor. He swiftly dismantled the Republic, establishing a totalitarian regime. Less than two months after coming to power, on March 23, 1933, the Reichstag (German Parliament) was dissolved, and from then on Hitler ruled by decree. All political parties except the **Nazis** were outlawed. Churches, labor unions, and youth organizations became tools of the **Nazi** state. Every medium of communication was used to mold public opinion. Symbols of the Republic disappeared, replaced by symbols of the **Nazis**.

A great number of limitations were imposed on the Jewish minority. The **Nazis** began to put their anti-Jewish measures into effect shortly after Hitler’s appointment. Over the next six years, these measures escalated, and it became increasingly difficult for Jews to make a living or lead normal lives. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 comprised two laws: The first law, The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, prohibited marriages and extramarital intercourse between Jews and Germans and also the employment of German females under forty-five in Jewish households. The second law, The Reich Citizenship Law, stripped Jews of their German citizenship; therefore, they could no longer vote or hold office.



Approximately 400 anti-Jewish measures were imposed on other non-Aryan groups such as “Gypsies” (Roma and Sinti) and homosexuals. For example, in July 1933, sterilization measures were approved for mentally and physically handicapped. “Gypsies” (Roma and Sinti) were increasingly segregated from German society, and homosexuals and political dissidents were imprisoned in the early **concentration camps** of Dachau and Buchenwald. In 1937, black children born of German women with African husbands were designated for sterilization.

The Nazis and World War II

THE BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II: THE ENTRAPMENT OF THOUSANDS OF EUROPEAN JEWS

The **Nazi** invasion of Poland in September 1939 precipitated World War II. By the following spring much of Eastern and Western Europe was controlled by the **Nazis**. Just before the outbreak of war, the Nazis had enacted in Germany the T4 Program (euthanasia program whose headquarters was located at 4 Tiergarten Street in Berlin) for gassing mental hospital patients who were deemed “unworthy of life.” While the program was ostensibly ended in Germany in 1941, it provided the prototype for dealing with racial enemies in **Nazi**-occupied Europe once World War II got underway. During the war years, 1939-1945, the **Nazis** clarified and implemented their policies for racial purity.

Initially, in Germany and **Nazi**-occupied territories, the **Nazis** concentrated Jews in Eastern Europe in centers known as ghettos, for example, in the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos.

In Western Europe the Jews were concentrated in centers known as **transit centers or camps**, such as **Westerbork** in the Netherlands and Drancy in France.

INVASION OF THE SOVIET UNION (THE U.S.S.R.) AND THE *EINSATZGRUPPEN*

While Jews all over Eastern Europe were being forced into ghettos, the Germans broke their non-aggression pact with Russia, on June 22, 1941, when they invaded the Soviet Union. Special commandos known as *Einsatzgruppen* followed the German army, slaughtering political dissidents and Jewish men, women, and children. Typically, victims were lead into wooded areas outside towns. They were stripped naked, forced to dig their own graves, and then were either shot or buried alive. By the fall and early winter of 1941, **Nazi** leadership began to view these actions as inefficient:

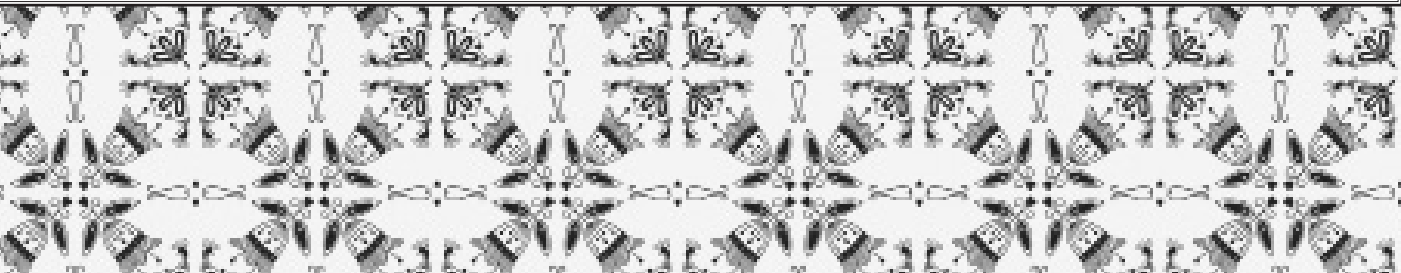
1) members of the commandos were often willing to perform their work but drank heavily to forget about their deeds; 2) it was difficult to predict and control reactions of local inhabitants; and 3) the process itself took too long.

THE “FINAL SOLUTION” TO THE JEWISH PROBLEM - THE WANNSEE CONFERENCE

On January 20, 1942, leading **Nazi** officials met at the Wannsee villa outside Berlin to plan the implementation of the “**final solution**” to the Jewish problem □ a euphemism for the mass murder of the Jewish population of Europe. At this conference, these officials listed millions of Jews that needed to be murdered □ Jews in occupied territories as well as in areas still to be conquered. According to their plans, trains were to transport Jews from all over Europe to **death camps** located in Eastern Europe under the pretext that they were be resettled and given work, adequate food, and shelter.

The major **death camps** Chelmno, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, **Sobibor**, Treblinka, and Majdanek were located in strategic areas of occupied Poland, close to major centers of Jews. For example, Warsaw Jews were sent to Treblinka, while Jews from Lvov were sent to Belzec. Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest camp, received Jews from all occupied countries outside Poland - from as far away as Greece. The gassing processes that had been developed by the T4 euthanasia program in 1939 were modified to be used in permanent gas chambers and crematoria in the death camps.

There were also slave **labor camps** outside Poland; these camps were not specifically designed as factories of death. For example, in Sachsenhausen slave labor camp, north of Berlin, inmates were forced to perform hard labor at the nearby brickworks or in armaments factories. For a variety of reasons, people in areas near **death camps** and **concentration camps** did little to intervene.





Westerbork Transit Camp in Northeastern Netherlands and Sobibor Death Camp in Eastern Poland
—history1900s

Only a small minority of individuals, “**upstanders**,” made decisions to save Jews, especially the children. The Kindertransport by Great Britain was one of the successes. The Wagner Act in the United States that would have saved a number of Jewish children was not passed; some congressmen felt that it would be cruel to separate children from their parents. Therefore, with little assistance from other countries, the overwhelming majority of Jewish children —between a million and a million and a half—were captured and murdered during the **Holocaust**. Only about 100,000 to 200,000 Jewish children survived the war, many in hiding.

World War II and the Holocaust in the Netherlands
(from *The Hidden Child Teacher Guide*)

In May 1940, **Nazi** Germany invaded the Netherlands with the expectation that the conquest would take but one day. The Dutch fought back and managed to prolong that time into five days before surrendering to the German forces.

No one had greater reason to fear the **Nazi** conquest of Holland than the Jews. In 1940, there were approximately 140,000 Jews living there. Of these, 110,000 were Dutch citizens and 30,000 were refugees who had fled to Holland from Germany and Austria. The **Nazi’s** harsh restrictive measures and barbaric actions introduced against the Jews in Austria immediately after the Anschluss and in Poland after the conquest were not introduced as rapidly in Holland giving some a false sense of hope. However, within two years, the restrictions had been set in place. The registration of businesses owned wholly or partially by Jews; the registration of all Jews; the definition of Jews in racial terms; prohibitions on travel and use of public parks; dismissal from civil service, cultural posts, and the stock exchange; removal of Jewish children from public schools; seizure of Jewish property; restrictions on shopping and

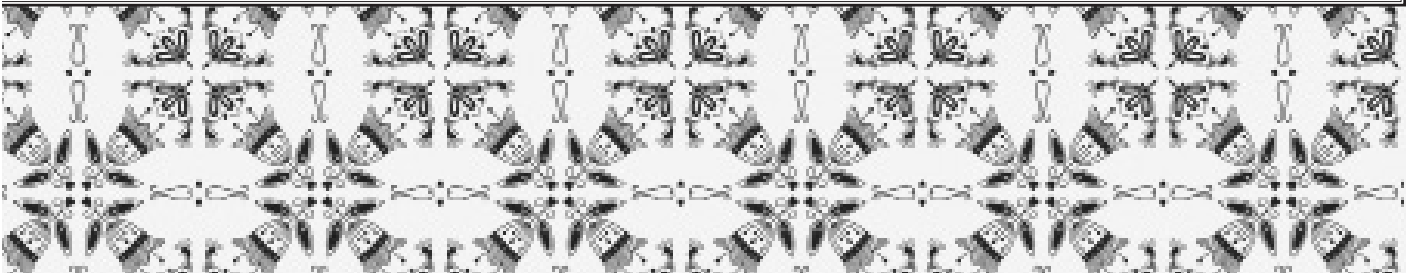
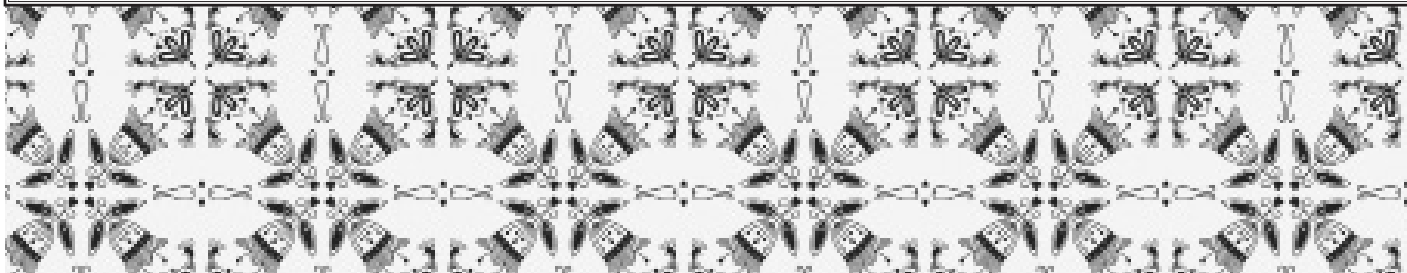
use of medical facilities; the wearing of the **Yellow Star**; and, all restrictions similar to those adopted in Germany were in place in Holland. In the spring of 1941, the Germans began the roundups and **deportations** of the Jews. Forced **labor camps**, transit camps, and **concentration camps** were set up.

Camps were established at **Westerbork** and **Vught** to contain the Jews until railroad schedules could be worked out to begin the **deportations**. By the time the **deportations** stopped with the ending of the war, nearly 110,000 Jews had been deported to Auschwitz, **Sobibor**, and other camps. Of these 110,000, only about 5,000 survived. Seventy-five percent of the Dutch Jews had been murdered in the camps. Approximately 25,000–30,000 Jews in Holland went into hiding. Two-thirds of those in hiding managed to survive with some heroic resistance and rescue efforts by the Dutch Underground. (6-7)



www.ushmm.or

The Westerbork and Vught Transit Camps in the Netherlands indicated.



Hidden Jews
(From *The Hidden Child Teacher’s Guide*)

Approximately 25,000–30,000 Jews in Holland went into hiding. Two-thirds of those in hiding managed to survive with resistance and rescue efforts by the **Dutch Underground**. Dutch rescuers hid the Jews, resistance fighters, and Allied fighters in their homes, farms and businesses. They also used church buildings, underground bunkers, tunnels, and secret places in the countryside. It was not unusual for those in hiding to be moved to different places as worries arose about detection by **collaborators** and police. The stress was tremendous for those in hiding and those supplying the hiding places. A constant fear of discovery or betrayal existed for them. There was the knowledge that the rescuer was risking not only self and property but also family members. As food, water, and heating fuel became increasingly scarce, the worry over how to secure these necessities became a burden. For those in hiding, it meant separation from family and friends, a sense of isolation, and a life of tremendous restriction. (7-8)

Hidden Jewish Children
(From *The Hidden Child Teacher’s Guide*)

The average number of hiding places for **hidden children** in the Netherlands was four, but it was not unusual for children to be moved more often. Some were smuggled to Switzerland and Spain but most remained in hiding within the Netherlands. Many of these children formed a close bond with their rescuers and the rescuers sometimes were reluctant to return the children to their parents or other relatives who had managed to survive the **Holocaust**. The **hidden children** and their families had much to overcome after **liberation**. For many there was the trauma of separation from a beloved foster family. There was the unusual situation created by the effort of renewing and rebuilding relations with parents, siblings, and/or other relatives that had not been seen for years. In many cases there was little or no memory of the natural parents. The children had a need to reclaim and rebuild their personal identity as well as begin to shape a new life in new surroundings—often in a different country. After enduring the trauma of the war and the **Holocaust**, **liberation** brought its own trauma that had to be overcome as a new life was shaped and built. (8)

The Dutch Underground

The **Dutch Underground** was a resistance movement of brave men and women who hated what was happening to their country, the Netherlands, and to the Dutch Jews. This secret network of people risked their lives and worked together to find safe places for Jews to hide. They also forged identification papers, which helped the Jews survive the **Holocaust**. Maud and Rita were saved by a member of the **Dutch Underground** named Jan Kanis. (www.historylearningsite.co.uk/dutch_resistance.htm)

Who was Jan Kanis?

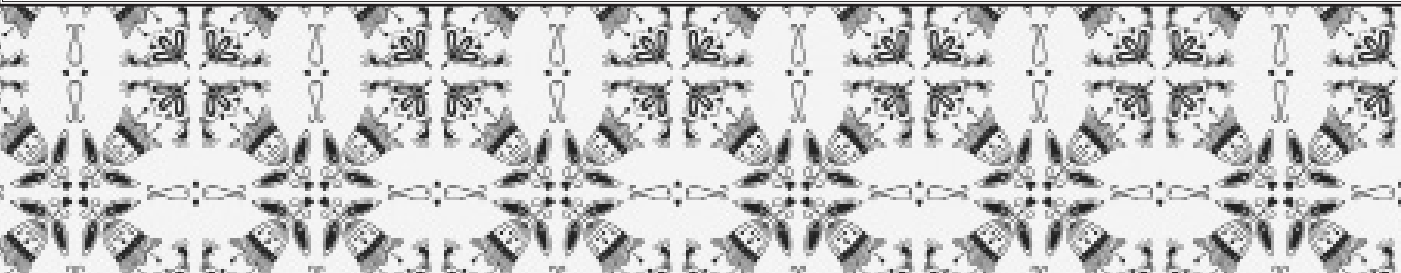
Jan Kanis’s rescue work with the Dutch Underground began in July 1942. He began working for the Dutch post office and eventually became the postmaster in Oldebroek. He realized that the so-called **labor camps** where Jews were sent were **death camps**.

Kanis began to collect addresses of people who were willing to hide Jews. Some people were wary of risking their lives to hide total strangers. But Kanis soon found individuals who immediately agreed to risk their lives for the desperate Jews. Maud and Rita Dahme were the first Jewish children Kanis brought into his home on their way to hidden lives and safety.

Kanis was betrayed and captured by the **Nazis**. He was transported to **Vught** Concentration Camp in the Netherlands and from there to Dachau Concentration Camp in southern Germany. Months later he was transported from Dachau to Natzweiler-Struthof Concentration Camp in eastern France where he was a forced laborer. In March 1945 he was sent on a death march to Dachau, ahead of the advancing **Allies**. By the time U.S. soldiers liberated Dachau; Kanis weighed only seventy-nine pounds, had typhus and was close to death.

Jan Kanis was truly an **upstander**. He was recognized for his heroic actions by Yad Vashem as **Righteous Among the Nations** in 1970. His wife, Nel (Petronella), was also recognized. (www.yadvashem.org)

Photograph

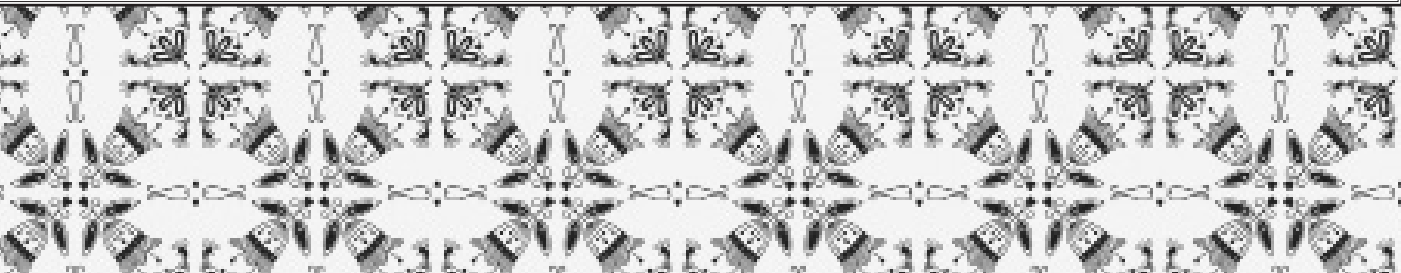


Upstanders

The word **upstander** is used to describe individuals, groups, or nations who, when bearing witness to injustice, decide to do something to stop or prevent these acts from continuing. While **upstanders** had their own reasons for risking their own well-being to rescue children, women, and men fleeing persecution by the **Nazis**, one trait shared by most of these individuals and communities is a feeling of responsibility or caring for others, even for strangers. (Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior 259-60)

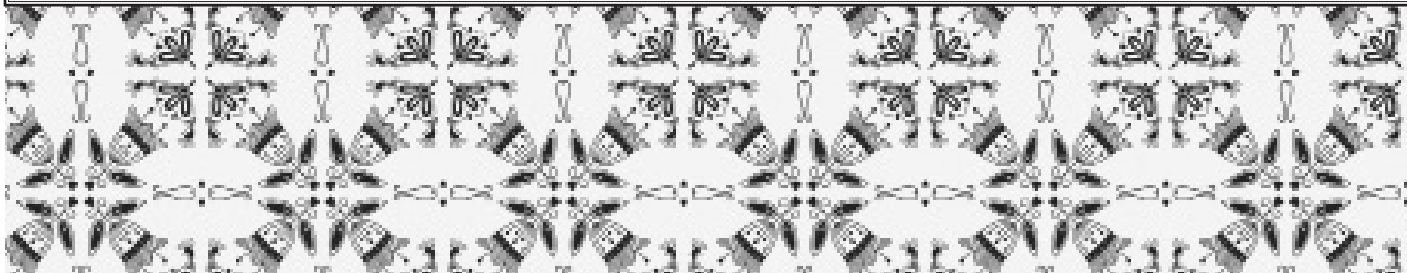
According to the scholar Samantha Power, who first coined the word, an **upstander** is an individual who takes risks to help others in danger and does not hesitate to criticize those who fail to help others in need or danger. The opposite of an **upstander** is a **bystander**. Maud Dahme recognizes several **upstanders** in her memoir. These are the people who risked their lives to hide her and her sister, saving them from the **Nazis** during the **Holocaust**.

Photographs



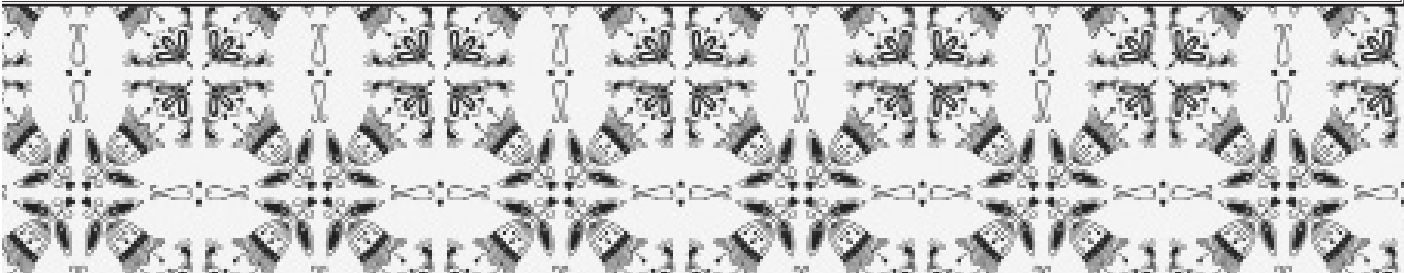
Chronology of Events

December 31, 1911	Lilli Peper-Eschwege, Maud’s mother, is born
January 5, 1913	Hartog Jakob Henry Peper, Maud’s father, is born
January 16, 1935	Lilli and Harry marry
January 24, 1936	Maud is born
February 23, 1938	Rita is born
September 1, 1939	World War II begins with the German invasion of Poland
May 1940	Germans occupy Amersfoort, Maud’s hometown
July 1941	Restrictions placed on all Jews in Amersfoort
May 3, 1942	All Jews had to wear a yellow star with <i>Jood</i> written in the center
July 1942	Maud and Rita go into hiding with the Spronks in Oldebroek
July 1942	Mother and Father go into hiding in Amersfoort
December 1944	Maud and Rita taken to Elburg fishing village to the Westerink family
April 19, 1945	Elburg is liberated
May 1945	Maud and Rita are reunited with their parents
Spring 1946	Maud sponsored by Canadian Red Cross for trip to England; Rita, to Switzerland
1947	Family moves to Amsterdam
April 24, 1950	Maud and her family immigrate to the United States
June 1954	Maud graduates high school
June 1954	Maud joins Pan Am
July 15, 1957	Maud marries Hans Dahme
January 19, 1959	Maud’s son, Randall, is born
October 23, 1962	Maud’s daughter, Susan, is born



March 1967	Hartog J. Peper, Maud’s father, dies
November 9, 1968	Twins, Amy and Karen, are born
October 1982	Maud speaks at establishment of the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education
1995	President, National Association of State Boards of Education
1998-2000	Chair, Interstate Migrant Education Council of NJ
September 9, 2000	Lilli, Maud’s mother, dies
January 29, 2001	Hans, Maud’s husband, dies
2006	<i>Hidden Child</i> , a PBS documentary released featuring Maud
2008	Maud honored at Sjoel Elburg in the Netherlands
May 12, 2012	Maud awarded an Honorary Doctor of Law from St. Elizabeth College Convent Station, New Jersey
2015	Maud’s memoir, <i>Chocolate, The Taste of Freedom</i> , published
2017	A children’s book based on Maud’s memoir will be published

Photographs



Glossary

Allies: the nations that fought together against the Nazis in World War II. The Allies were the following: the U.S., Britain, France, U.S.S.R., Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Greece, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, and Yugoslavia.

Antisemitism: hatred of Jews. Antisemitism goes back to the earliest centuries of Christianity, and since that time, there have been legal, social, political, and economic restrictions on Jews throughout the centuries. In the 19th Century, Wilhelm Marr coined the word to describe a racial hatred of Jews.

Bystander: a person who rather than attempt to assist or intervene, stands near and observes instead of helping someone; in terms of the Holocaust, bystanders were people who played it safe. Bystanders may have remained unaware, or perhaps were aware of what was going on around them, but being fearful of the consequences, they chose not to take risks and help Nazi victims. Compare to **Upstander**.

Collaborators: the citizens who cooperated with the Nazis, working with the enemy in the destruction of the Jews

Concentration Camps: places of the Nazis’ systematic oppression and mass murder of Jews, political adversaries, and others considered socially and racially undesirable. There were concentration camps, forced labor camps, **death camps**, **transit camps**, and prisoner-of-war camps. The living conditions in all the camps were inhumane. The Nazis’ goal was to murder the Jews and other through gassing, shooting, or working them to death.



Transit camps examples (on left): Drancy (France) and Westerbork (Netherlands);

Slave labor examples: Vught (Netherlands), Ravensbrueck and Stutthof (Germany), Gross Rosen, Auschwitz, Plaszów (Poland);

Ghetto/Transit camp: Terezin (Ger: Theresienstadt) in Czechoslovakia;

Death Camps (on right): Chelmno, Treblinka, **Sobibor**, Majdanek, Birkenau, Belzec (all in Poland)

ushmm.org

Death camps: The primary purpose of death camps was the methodical killing of millions of innocent people. Six death camps were constructed by the Nazis in Poland. These were Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, Lublin (also called Majdanek) and Chelmno. Chelmno, the first death camp, began operating in 1941. The others began in 1942.

Deportation: the forced transport of people. In terms of the Holocaust it was when the Nazis ordered the removal of Jews from their homes into ghettos, camps, and killing centers.

Dutch Nazis: those Dutch citizens who belonged to the Nazi party and collaborated with the Nazis.

Dutch Underground: those Dutch citizens who resisted the Nazi efforts to take over their country; they risked their lives to hide and rescue Jews through various acts of resistance.

“Final Solution”: the plan developed by the Nazis to exterminate European Jewry in its entirety

Garrison: the place where a group of troops are stationed, or refers to the group of soldiers stationed there

Genocide: the partial or entire extermination of religious, racial or ethnic groups. See the United Nations definition.

Hidden Child: a young person who must hide as Maud and Rita hid. It may also refer to a child hiding her/his true identity and assuming a different identity

Holocaust: (1933-1945) The word literally means *consumed by fire*. It began when Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and ended when WW II ended in Europe in 1945. Six million Jews were murdered during those years including one and one half million children. Millions of others including Roma and Sinti (“Gypsies”), the handicapped, Poles, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, political dissidents, and others also were persecuted and murdered. (See **Shoah**.)

Kristallnacht: the November Pogrom: when Nazis burned synagogues and looted and destroyed Jewish homes and businesses on November 9-10, 1938. Kristallnacht means the “Night of Broken Glass”; the German word was a Nazi term. There were mass arrests of Jewish men who were then sent to concentration camps. Women were raped. Some Jews were killed.

Labor camps: places set up where Jews, political dissidents, Roma and Sinti (“Gypsies”), Jehovah’s Witnesses, and others were imprisoned by the Nazis and forced to live and work under cruel and deplorable conditions. These conditions resulted in the death of many of those imprisoned there.

Liberation: the freeing by the Allied armies of territories and people occupied by enemy forces. It also refers to the release by the Allies of the prisoners from the concentration and labor camps.

Nazi: the shortened name for a member of the National Socialist German Workers Party, which was a right-wing, nationalistic, antisemitic political party. The Party was headed by Adolf Hitler and was active in Germany between 1920 and 1945. They implemented the actions that led to World War II and the Holocaust.

Restrictions: laws that confine or take away one’s privileges/rights. There were many restrictions on Jews during the Holocaust. The following are some examples: There were signs in the parks and restaurants forbidding Jewish entry. Jews had to carry identity cards stamped with a “J.” Licenses for driving and fishing were removed. Bikes were taken away. Jews were prohibited from using public transportation. Everyone had to turn in radios. Jewish housewives could only shop during certain hours and in certain stores. Jewish children could not go to public schools anymore. Jews could not be patients in hospitals. Jews were forbidden to associate with non-Jews. Jews had to wear the Jewish star.

Righteous, Righteous Among the Nations, or Righteous Gentiles: the term applied to those non-Jews who saved Jews from their Nazi persecutors at the risk of their own lives.

Shoah: The Hebrew word meaning “catastrophe,” denoting the catastrophic destruction of European Jewry during World War II. The term is used in Israel. The Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) has designated an official day, called *Yom HaShoah*, as a day of commemorating the Shoah or Holocaust. For some scholars the term *Shoah* is the preferred term for the historical period, 1933-1945.

Sobibor: located in eastern Poland, it was one of the six death camps built by the Nazis.

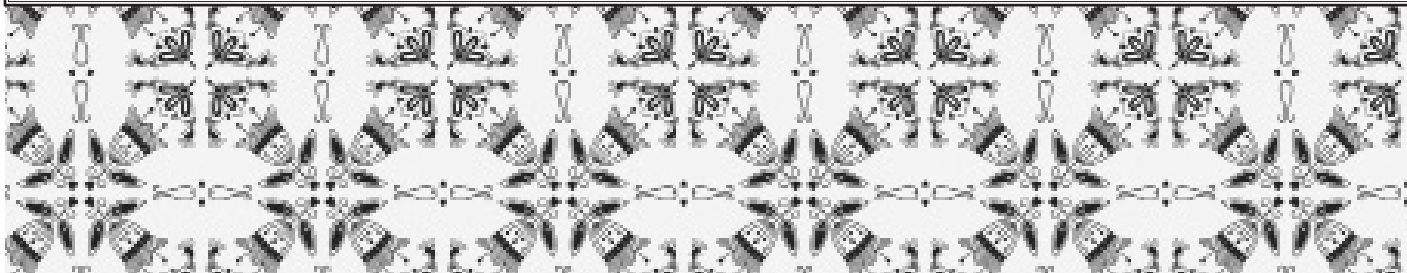
Transit Camp: a place where Jews and other prisoners were taken after being rounded up by the Nazis; it was a temporary site until the Jews were transported to the concentration or death camps.

Westerbork: a Nazi transit camp in the Netherlands

Upstander: someone who stands up for an innocent victim of persecution or abuse. An upstander who actually saves someone’s life is a rescuer. The term was coined by Samantha Power in her book, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. (Compare to Bystander.)

Vught: a Nazi concentration camp in the Netherlands, in the south, established in 1942.

Yellow Star: a six-pointed yellow star of David (the symbol of Judaism) that Nazis ordered Jews to wear; this star was sewn on all their outer clothing to identify them as Jews.



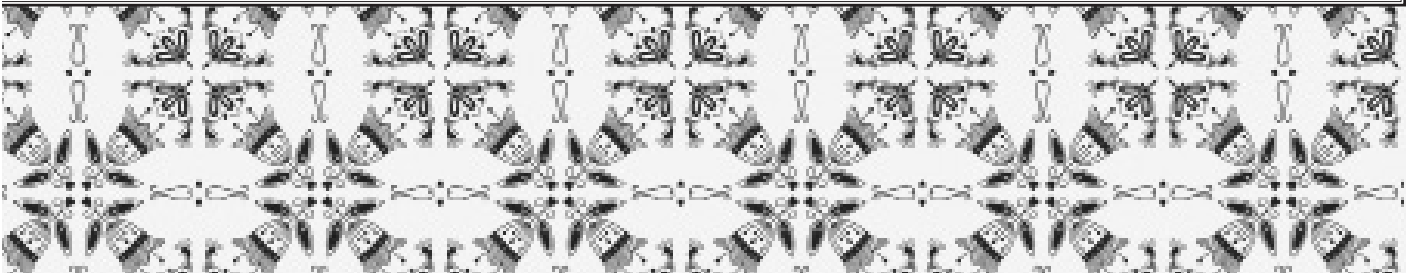
Name _____ Date _____

KWL Chart

Before reading, list information in the first two columns. Once reading is done, complete the final column.

Topic: _____

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned



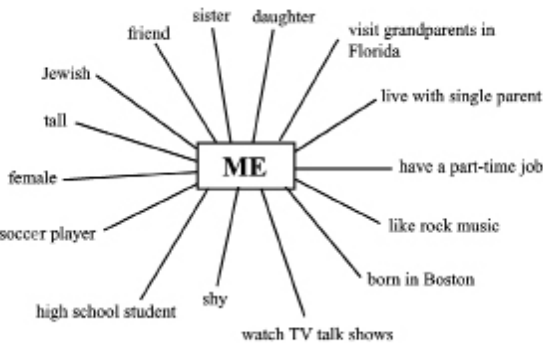
Classroom Activities

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. *Chocolate, The Taste of Freedom* is a memoir. What are the differences between a memoir, a biography, an autobiography and a novel?
2. The Germans attacked the Netherlands in May 1940. They occupied the country and placed many restrictions on the Dutch Jews. Name some of these restrictions. The restrictions were progressive in nature. Describe how the restrictions became harsher over time.
3. What dilemma did all Jewish males between the ages of 18 and 45 face on August 16, 1942? Where did they go? What fate awaited them there?
4. The Germans ordered the Amersfoort Jews to leave their homes and resettle in the East. What happened to Maud’s home after her parents left it?
5. How did Maud’s parents find a way of escape for her and her sister? Who was instrumental in helping them?
6. What words would you use to describe an **upstander**? In what ways was Jan Kanis an **upstander**?
7. Who was the family that first hid Maud and Rita? Describe the adjustments the girls had to make there.
8. Explain the effect that being a **hidden child** had on Maud’s Judaism.
9. Why was it dangerous for someone to hide Jews?
10. What did Maud do on the Spronks’ farm to keep herself occupied? What were her “toys?”
11. Maud and Rita were eventually moved away from the farm. Where did they go? Describe the place and the family with whom they went to live.
12. What was Maud’s **liberation** day like on April 19, 1945? How does she remember it?
13. What words would you use to describe Maud’s reactions to returning home with her parents? Why?
14. Maud began to rebuild her life when the family immigrated to the U.S. What impresses you about Maud’s accomplishments throughout her life?
15. Explain the reasons child survivors would want to remain silent about their traumas during the Holocaust.
16. Maud says, “Initially I was reluctant to deal with my past; however I had come to realize the importance of witnessing to others about my **Holocaust** experiences.” What event prompted Maud to end her silence about what she had experienced in the **Holocaust**?
17. Maud Dahme’s passion for education is displayed in many ways. Name some of some of her many endeavors. Why is Maud so passionate about public education?
18. What would you say Maud Dahme message seeks to convey to all with whom she shares her story?
19. What are Maud’s feelings on forgiveness? How do you feel about what she has to say about forgiveness?

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Using the chart below, prepare an identity chart **for yourself**. Consider all the factors—family, school, hobbies, nationality, ethnicity, religion, etc.—that influence how you think about yourself and make decisions.



Sample Chart

2. Now prepare an identity chart for **Maud Dahme**. Make sure to include influences before, during, and after World War II and the Holocaust. Discuss this in your group.
3. Write a personal letter to Maud Dahme. Describe the impact her story had on you. Ask any questions that you have about her story.
4. Make a chart with three columns. On the top of one column write **Hidden Children**, on one *Natural Family*, and on the third write *Rescuer Family*. Fill in the columns with the challenges and problems each group faced as a result of the events of the Holocaust.
5. Being a “hidden child” implies that a person is hidden physically, but have you considered that it also means a person’s identity is hidden as well? In what ways was Maud’s *identity* “hidden”?
6. Compose a letter either to Tannie Spronk or Jo Westerink. What kinds of things would you like to say to them? What questions would you like to ask them?
7. What qualities do you think are necessary to be an **upstander**? Do you know any **upstanders**? Who were the **upstanders** in this memoir? Describe and discuss.
8. Look up the words “victim” and “survivor” in the dictionary. List the definitions. What are the differences in the meanings? Which word best do you think best describes Maud Dahme’s experience as told in her memoir?
9. Summarize in three sentences the message Maud stresses when she speaks or writes.

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Explain the meaning of the phrase “Power of One.”
2. Understand the long-term effects the Holocaust has on survivors.
3. Why is it important to remember historical events such as the Holocaust and other **genocides**?
4. Why is it important for **Holocaust** survivors to share their memoirs through written or audio testimony?
5. Why is it important to use imagery, photographs, and video footage? What is the impact of such depictions?
6. Investigate the lives of significant **Holocaust upstanders**. Maud mentions Raoul Wallenberg. Other **upstanders** to consider are the following: André and Magda Trocmé, Corrie Ten Boom, Rut Matthijsen, Jan Karski, and Aristides Sousa Mendes.
7. Ervin Staub, in his study of rescuers, states, “*Goodness, like evil, often begins in small steps. Heroes evolve; they aren’t born. Very often the rescuers make only a small commitment at the start . . . but once they had taken that step they began to see themselves differently, as someone who helps.*” Separate into two groups and debate the following question: Are people born heroes or do they evolve over time, as Staub says?
8. At the darkest hour for the Netherlands in the twentieth century, the Dutch Underground rose up, resisted, and rescued—goodness in the midst of evil and atrocity. Consider that the Underground rescued something else as well—the very idea that human beings are capable of goodness. In considering their story, one must not refer to these people as exemplary heroes, far beyond the realm of possibility for most people. Why?
9. How would you define the word “reconciliation”? Look up the word in the dictionary. Describe the ways that the town of Elburg made a number of reconciliation attempts toward the Jews for their past mistreatment during the **Holocaust**. In what ways did Maud Dahme take part in this reconciliation process?
10. Use a map of Europe and locate the Netherlands. Approximate the locations of Amersfoort and the **Westerbork** Transit Camp. Now locate Poland. Approximate the location of the **Sobibor** Death Camp where the Dutch Jews were killed.
11. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has an online exhibit entitled “*Life in the Shadows: Hidden Children and the Holocaust.*” Find and follow their virtual tour, find the additional links, and study guide at <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/hiddenchildren/index/>.

Photographs

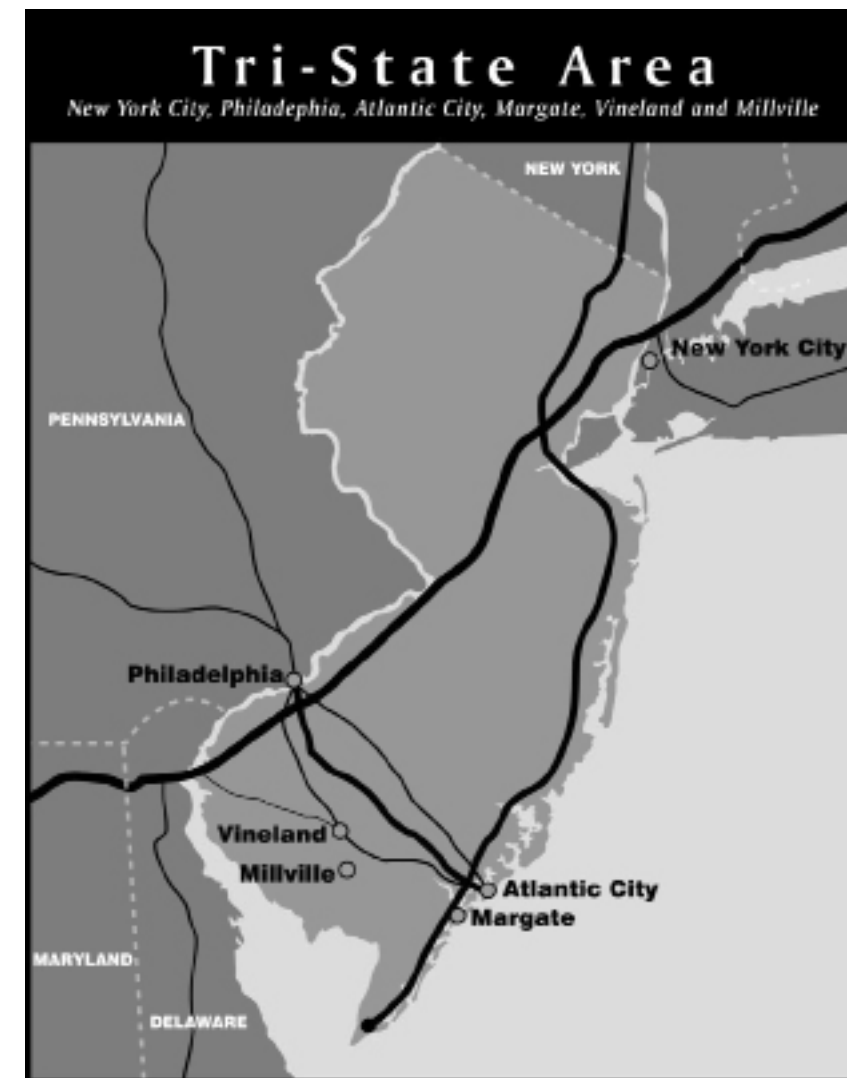
Reference Maps



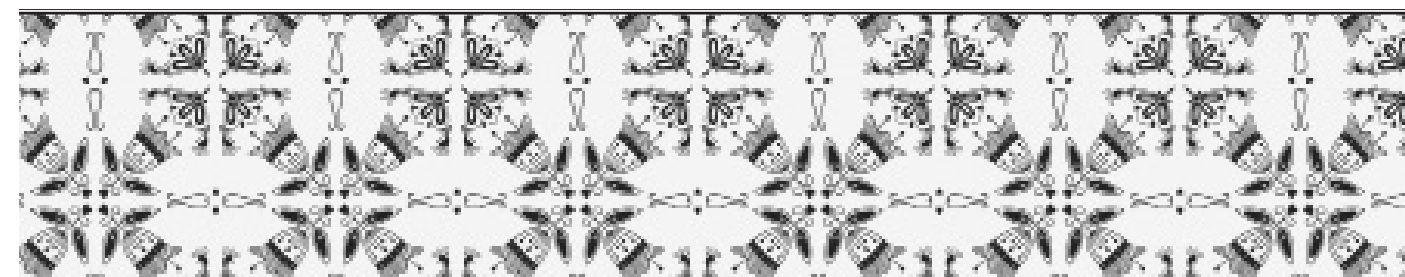
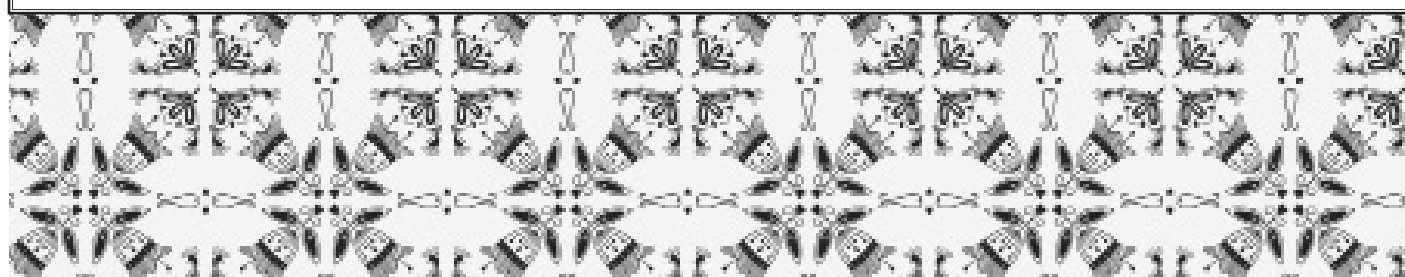
Hilversum and Amersfoort, Netherlands, where Maud’s family lived—circled
—utex.edu



Oldebroek and Elburg, Netherlands, where Maud and Rita were hidden.
 —weather-forecast.com



When Maud and her family first arrived in the United States, they lived in Queens, New York, and later in Forest Hills, New York. Maud and Hans lived in Forest Hills, Island Park, and Malden, Massachusetts, before moving to New Jersey where they lived in a number of cities: Lebanon, Annandale, and Flemington.



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Strom, Margot Stern, and William S. Parsons. *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Watertown, MA: Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, 1994. Print.

SUGGESTED WEBSITES

<http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust.htm>

<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org>

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

<http://www.nj.gov/education/holocaust/>

<http://www.njn.net/television/specials/hiddenchild/>

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/maps/>

<http://www.ushmm.org>

<http://www.yadvashem.org>

SUGGESTED DVDS

The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. DVD. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1986.

The Hidden Child. DVD. NJN Public Television, 2006.

SUGGESTED READING

Berenbaum, Michael. *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1993. Print.

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Klempner, Mark. *The Heart Has Reasons: Holocaust Rescuers and Their Stories of Courage*. Cleveland: Pilgrim P, 2006. Print.

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