**Proposed Title:**

**Hiding in Holland, 1942-1945**

Shulamit Reinharz ([reinharz@brandeis.edu](mailto:reinharz@brandeis.edu)) 617-487-5751

**Brief Description**

**Full Description**

Anne Frank’s well-known diary records her experience while hiding in Amsterdam during the German Occupation of the Netherlands in World War II. When Dutch and German Nazis discovered Anne and the seven other Jews hiding with her, they transported her to the Dutch transit camp, Westerbork, into which almost all the Jews of Holland were funneled. From there she was shipped by train to Auschwitz in Poland and then transferred to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. There she died of typhus shortly before her 16th birthday.

Ironically, the fame of Anne’s story has inadvertently undermined the more representative story about hiding. Hiding actually was the best way for Jews to survive if they could not flee the country to a safe haven. Approximately 20,000 Dutch Jews became *onderduikers* (Jews in hiding) of whom 8,000 survived (40%). 100,000 Dutch Jews were sent to death camps, of whom approximately 6,000 were alive at war’s end (.006%). Those who obeyed the Nazis were much more likely to die than were those who hid.

The extraordinary popularity of Anne Frank’s diary might suggest that many studies of hiding during the Holocaust would have been undertaken. But aside from personal testimonies, there are only a few such studies.[[1]](#endnote-1) Instead, most research about hiding focuses on *the rescuers* and their motivation for risking their lives to save Jews. My focus in *Hiding in Holland* is to focus on those who hid.

During the nearly 80 years since the end of the war, researchers interested in this topic have been stymied by the fact that Dutch *onderduikers* and their rescuers generally did not want to talk about their war-time experiences. Rescuers did not want to be perceived as heroes, and survivors didn’t want to revisit the past. Now that very few *onderduikers* and rescuers are still alive, the job and privilege of telling their story is left to their children. I am one of them. Born in 1946 in Amsterdam, I am a child of *onderduikers* who hid in the Netherlands and survived.

The story of hiders’ successful experiences reflects people’s general perceptions of what happened during the Holocaust. If they think about this topic at all, they believe that nearly *all* European Jews were murdered in the vast network of concentration camps, ghettos, killing fields, ravines, mobile killing units, burning synagogues or extermination camps. People equate the Holocaust with Auschwitz, thereby diminishing other important phenomena. Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum have labelled this problem, “The Auschwitz Syndrome.”[[2]](#endnote-2) In fact, the singular focus on Auschwitz has led some survivors to think that if they did not survive a concentration camp, they were not survivors at all. This is not so.

In her recent bestseller, People Love Dead Jews (Norton, 2021), Dara Horn proposes another idea that might explain the paucity of studies about successful hiding: there is more interest in the *killing or death of Jews* than in *their survival.* Or as she put it, “people love dead Jews - living Jews, not so much.” My review of the literature leads me to agree. Thus, it is understandable that *Holocaust research has produced less analysis of Jewish survival,* including survival by hiding. British/Dutch sociologist Peter Tammes reached the same conclusion: “The question of why [some Jews] survived has received little attention, as the focus [of research] has been chiefly on differences in the death rates of Jews living in different countries.” That is why, although the public might know that 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust, the question hardly anyone asks is – “how many Jews survived in Europe?” One answer is 3.5 million.

I suggest that it is as important to study the 3.5 million as it is to study the 6. I have never encountered a chart that compares the impact of the Holocaust on European countries that lists percentages and/or number of Jews who *survived*.

This missing survival-focused view of the Holocaust also relates to a question much larger than hiding in Holland during World War II: How have Jews *throughout history* found ways to survive? After all, many ancient civilizations have disappeared; why didn’t the Jews disappear? This age-old question has been tackled by scholars, rabbis and other writers who have reached such numerous contradictory explanations as assimilation versus non-assimilation, belief in God’s plan that the Jews will survive versus reliance on human action rather than divine intervention to defy the oppressor, and more. All of these arguments start with the premise that Jewish history is a series of continuous calamities, crusades, attacks, pogroms, Inquisitions, rapes, wars, edicts, forced conversion, expulsion, displacement, imprisonment, compulsory military conscription, and more. There is even a joke that asks what the theme is of most Jewish holidays. Answer: They tried to kill us, we survived, let’s eat.

*We must remember that none of the horrors listed above achieved total annihilation of the Jews*. There was always a remnant that survived to produce and teach another generation. Even though Hitler’s goal was to make Europe *Judenrein* – devoid of Jews. But some Jews survived to populate Displaced Persons camps, relocate to other countries, or return to their home countries. There is even a Hebrew phrase, *sheerit haplitah, to refer to the remnant that survives.*

Jews throughout history have employed various means to survive, one of which was hiding. Although hiding did not guarantee survival, it offered a possibility. Hiding was not the same in each country the Nazis conquered. In Eastern Europe, some Jews hid in forests. In Ukraine a few Jews survived by hiding in underground caves. Some Jews hid in plain sight by changing their identities. Recently, Jewish hiding places in sewers under the city of Lviv, Ukraine, have been discovered. In Holland, Jews hid in the attics, basements and barns of non-Jews who took them in. Some hid in convents disguised as Christians.

*My next point is crucial: Hiding almost always requires help by non-Jews*, variously called rescuers, Righteous Gentiles, or hosts. Some Jews and gentiles had amicable relationships with each other before the need to hide arose. Others were strangers. Examining how Jews survived by hiding leads to the inevitable conclusion that throughout history Jews survived in part *because non-Jews helped them*. In other words, *the continuity of Jewish life rests, to a certain degree, on the assistance given by non-Jews*. A Jew *might survive* if s/he hid, but *only* if non-Jews helped. This idea - the role of non-Jews in Jewish survival - offers a larger rationale and framework for my book.

Why is this not common knowledge? I think the answer is that although people may attribute the survival of individual Jews to individual non-Jews, they don’t make the intellectual leap to understand the consequent survival of the Jewish people over the centuries. Hiding in Holland: 1942-1945 does not explain all of Jewish history, of course. Rather, I focus on the years 1933-1947 in Europe, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany until two years after the war ended. I develop my argument through the case study of one Jewish man, my father, Max Michael Rothschild (1921-2013), whose experience sheds light on “survival by hiding” of the individual and of the Jewish people. Because he hid, Max Rothschild became one of the 3.5 million rather than one of the 6. Because he was hidden, Max Rothschild became a father of the next generation and a grandfather of the next.

**Background Research**

My late father loved to write, and over the years, he was able to save a great deal of what he composed. He also collected what other people wrote and saved documents that explain and support his assertions. Unlike Anne Frank’s story that rests on one document – her diary - my father’s story rests on many sources: several diaries he wrote at different times while hiding; his correspondence with a German deserter and many other individuals; a 261-page typed account of his life written from the distance of 50 years after the war’s end; a travel journal; essays; notes he received from others, and many official documents. In addition, Dad carried on a voluminous correspondence. For some reason, when he was still very young, he trained himself to remember as much as possible. In later years he wrote down what he remembered from age three on. I examine these materials beginning when he was 13. He accumulated and saved report cards, police reports, concentration camp materials and more, many of which I discovered about two decades before he died at age 92.

To all of this collected material I added my interviews with scholars in many countries and an overview of scholarly research and literature in various archives and libraries. The process of unearthing my father’s written materials for this book took decades, in part because while I was digging for information, I was also an active, full-time faculty member involved in other major projects and the mother of two children. When I retired in 2017, I was able to focus on writing this book.

Unlike the majority of Holocaust survivors, my father talked constantly about his life in Europe before coming to America. My mother (Ilse Strauss Rothschild), a fellow survivor, was more reticent. As they reached old age, my parents agreed to my interviewing them about “the Hitler years,” the term my father used. I also traveled to all the places in Europe significant to my parents, sometimes living there for many weeks. Throughout the writing of this book, I read widely to compare Dad’s views and my own with those of diarists, memoirists, scholars and novelists. Some of my research challenged what researchers had written, and some scholarly material challenged what Dad had written. Although my father loved to write and talk, several of my questions remain unanswered.

Hiding in Holland: 1942-1945 does not *begin* on the day my father was born in 1921 or the day he went into hiding in 1942. Instead, the book begins soon after he became a *bar mitzvah* in a rural German town, Gunzenhausen, the town in which he had been raised. Similarly, Hiding in Holland: 1942-1945 does not *end* with the liberation of Holland in May 1945. Here my book is in line with the stress my father and several historians have placed on *the continuity between the German occupation of a country and its post-liberation period, which some call* “The Little Shoah.”

In the early post-war years, Jewish survivors in the Netherlands faced both new and continued hardships. They also faced Dutch non-Jewish people’s lack of acknowledgement of their collaborative role during the Occupation. The Dutch railway company took sixty years to apologize for deporting 107,000 Dutch Jews to Nazi concentration camps. The Dutch government did not apologize for its behavior until years after my father’s death in January 2018.

**Structure of the Book**

Hiding in Holland consists of 5 parts: an Introduction, Part One (Growing up in Germany), Part Two (Hiding in Holland), Part Three (Post-Hiding in the Netherlands), and a Conclusion. The introduction and conclusion are written in my voice, and Parts 1-3 are written in the voice of Max Michael Rothschild.

Below is a summary of the content:

**Introduction** (pp. 1-26), written in my voice, describes how I found the materials for this book.

**Part One: Growing Up in Germany** (pp. 27-159). Contains material on Rothschild’s *early acts of resistance*, his involvement with socialist Zionism, his witnessing of the expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany, his experience on Kristallnacht, his imprisonment in Buchenwald, and his entry into Holland.

**Part Two**: **Hiding in Holland** (pp.159-502). Contains material about Rothschild’s exploitation by Dutch farmers in the town of Almelo, his assistance by the Deventer Organization, his relations with non-Jewish Dutch people who became crucial to his survival, British policies that were a barrier to going to Palestine, his move to Amsterdam, his aborted escape from Holland, the German invasion of the Netherlands and the imposition of anti-Jewish decrees.

It includes discussion of the canal workers’ strike, Max’s continued efforts to leave Holland, the Jewish Council, the unhelpful Queen Wilhelmina, his early practice of hiding, return to the farms of Almelo, the farming families for whom Dad worked and the fate of Mom’s parents after Kristallnacht. It continues with the role of music as resistance, the order to wear the Jewish star, the encounter with “miracles,” and Dad’s friend, Shushu, who recommended that Dad hide in August 1942 nearly three years before the war’s end. I present a way of thinking about hiding as a 4-step process that not everyone could carry out.

The Westerweel resistance group, Dad’s destruction of his Nazi call-up order, the “Wanted Poster” with his photograph, and his first few hiding places are next. The rules for hiding, denouncements, finding a “permanent” hiding place, feeling free and disliking one’s hiding partner follow. I present various segments of Dad’s hiding diary and report on the strain of maintaining *absolute silence* and enduring *enforced idleness*. I provide a description of building a “secret hide-out within the larger hide-out.” I write about my father risking it all for love, living with new rescuers – the Schoutens - in Rotterdam, the Volkhuis Movement and honoring the Schoutens at Yad Vashem.

The Hunger [and Cold] Winter [1944-1945] come next. From there I trace Dad’s move to a different house where he could hide with his girlfriend. I recount the story of how *she saved his life*. During the last period of hiding, my father befriended a German deserter, joined the Communist Resistance, published a newspaper, fled to another hiding place, and finally was liberated.

**Part Three: Post-Hiding in the Netherlands** (pp. 502-765). Written in my father’s voice, this section deals with *the challenges of having survived*. Just as there is a process of going into hiding, there is a process of leaving hiding. This process consists of re-assembling one’s life, one building block at a time.

Much of the interpretation in the Post-Hiding section is built on correspondence. My father and mother had to decide where to live and then had to wage a long, hard battle to get there because they did not want to remain in the Netherlands. They had to cope with the destruction of the Dutch Jewish community, which prompted them to work helping other survivors, especially children.

The Jewish survivors of the Dutch Occupation had countless challenges – medical, nutritional, psychological, financial, informational, educational, perhaps religious, organizational, legal, and existential. Jewish survivors who had hidden had to recover from the physical and emotional experience of near-starvation and continuous fear, of existing without moving. Dad wrote, “I had to overcome the effects of being cooped up indoors for close to 3 years, always on the alert, not knowing if hiding would ever end.” Survivors, on the other hand, had to deal with news of people’s deaths and had to try to find ways to still accept the fact that they, themselves, had survived. Rarely did they have the chance to rebuild their lives in their former homes because those had been destroyed or stolen. And sadly, some Jews were endangered by renewed acts of antisemitism.

My father took on new identities after the liberation: he was a survivor, a former member of the resistance, a correspondent, a groom, a caregiver, a new parent, a journalist, and an applicant for immigration to the U.S. among others. He served the Jewish remnant by trying to return hidden children to their parents. The Dutch government was cold-hearted and unhelpful. The mail system was not functioning and it was difficult to deal with the big gaps in correspondence with his parents in the U.S. Holocaust denial and lying about what one had done during the Occupation were rampant. “People are not willing to acknowledge what they have done, to accept blame, to clear their conscience,” he wrote.

Survivors held memorial ceremonies for those who did not survive. They hunted down medication that was in short supply. They searched endlessly for housing and even ended up *returning to live with their rescuers*. They longed to reunite with family. “I was prohibited from volunteering in the concentration camps as a civilian and was having a hard time finding a paying job…I continued simply to try to survive, first while hiding and now in post-hiding.” Max even had to devote time and energy to getting papers attesting to the fact that he was not a collaborator but rather part of the resistance.

Ilse and my father wanted to marry, but when they came out of hiding the Dutch government put many bureaucratic impediments in their way. Finally, the permission to marry materialized. Perhaps because of all the difficulties in their post-war lives, Ilse became sick on her wedding day, probably with a-fib or post-traumatic-stress syndrome. She was already 4-months pregnant as well. Dad tried to protect Ilse’s mental health by not letting her encounter bad news, including the fact that her sister had died in Palestine. But then, he wrote, “Although I was worried about Ilse, I decided to return to Munich and my home town [Gunzenhausen] to see what had become of the places and people I had grown up with.” People who formerly were dangerous antisemites now groveled with fear when encountering my father in his Jewish Brigade uniform. He devoted time to obtaining exact information about the way many of his relatives had died.

Although Ilse remained ill, on June 17, 1946, a little over a year since coming out of hiding, she gave birth to me [Shulamit Tirzah]. A few days later, Ilse developed a nasty case of mastitis that lasted about 6 months because of the lack of appropriate medication, almost necessitating the removal of one breast. Max devoted his time to the endless task of trying to get visas to enter the U.S. While he was waiting for the visas, he traveled to Basle, Switzerland as a journalist to report on the 22nd World Zionist Congress, the first Congress to be held after 7 years of war. He details the problems created by the British government and the Arab nations in allowing Jews to live in Palestine. In addition to communicating about the Congress, he needed to create a track record for possible future employment as a journalist in the U.S.

**Conclusion: There is no End (pp. 765-840).** This chapter briefly outlines our arrival in the U.S., our short-lived subsequent move to Israel and our return to the U.S. My father earned an M.A. (1951) from Boston University and then a Ph.D. (1958) from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. After being ordained, Dad became an appreciated itinerant rabbi. At age 59, he retired and lived another 33 years. At the same time, I got a good Jewish education, passively learned German, became a “child of survivors,” and started telling my non-Jewish school friends about my parents’ experience during the Holocaust!

My father insisted that I know more than generalizations. He wanted me to mourn the experiences of particular relatives and friends who had been murdered.

This education has led me to explore the phenomenon of hiding and to return to his hometown of Gunzenhausen to participate in a bi-weekly “Dialogue Group” composed of current Gunzenhausen residents and descendants of former Jewish residents. The new openness to interpersonal discussion in Gunzenhausen reflects the group members’ interest in learning about the Jews who lived there for centuries until Hitler made it “Judenrein” (i.e., ethnically cleansed of Jews). These people have expressed hope that Hiding will be translated into German, just as my Dutch friends and colleagues would like to see Hiding translated into Dutch, and my Israeli relatives and friends would like to read it in Hebrew.

As Dad entered old age, I was able to see the impact of hears of hiding on his psyche. Just before he died, Dad shared with me conclusions derived from his life experience – e.g., the importance of living in freedom, and recognizing that there are some good people in this world, an idea derived from years of good people hiding him.

**Author Information**

I was the Jacob Potofsky Professor of Sociology at Brandeis University between 1982 and 2017. I am now Professor Emerita. From 1991 to 2001, I directed the Brandeis University Women’s Studies Program and, among many other innovations, created a graduate degree program in Women’s Studies including Jewish Women’s Studies. In 1997, I founded the award-winning, fully endowed Hadassah-Brandeis Institute (see https://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/) with the mission to develop fresh ways of thinking about Jews and gender.

In 1998 I co-founded the English-language journal, Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women’s Studies & Gender Issues, which has produced 43 issues. (see <https://iupress.org/journals/nashim/> ). Next, I created the HBI Book Series on Jewish Women (<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/series/HBI.html>), of which I was Editor-in-Chief. This series published about 60 titles with the University Press of New England, now Brandeis University Press. Several books in the series have won National Jewish Book Awards. In 2001, I established the Women’s Studies Research Center (WSRC) (<https://www.facebook.com/brandeiswsrc/>) at Brandeis University as well as the Kniznik Gallery of Feminist Art <https://www.facebook.com/Brandeis-Kniznick-Gallery-155950344436109/>. For many years I have been a member of the Brandeis Holocaust Research Study Group (<https://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/research-projects/hrsg/index.html> ).

Throughout my years of academic institution-building, I continued my active research and publication program. Some of my work is single-authored and other items are co-authored, part of an edited volume, or co-edited with colleagues in the U.S., Germany and Israel, where I have a broad array of academic contacts. I have an extensive publishing record in the fields of Holocaust studies, sociological research methods, kibbutz studies, Jewish studies, gender studies, and more. A recent Holocaust-related publication is “Jewish Social Memory and the Augmented Stages of Genocide,” pp. 49-61, in Jutta Lindert and Armen T. Marsoobian, Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Genocide and Memory (Springer, 2018) <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-65513-0> .

In addition to articles and chapters, I have published 14 books, two with Oxford University Press, two with Indiana University Press, two with Transaction Books, and one with Brandeis University Press, among others. My work is regularly cited.

For 5 years I published a weekly op-ed in a large circulation Jewish newspaper. I am interviewed regularly for Jewish publications, and I frequently moderate Zoom-based programs about rescuers. I have extensive experience as a public speaker and hope to create a speaking tour to publicize Hiding in Holland 1942-1945.

After retiring from Brandeis University, I directed my attention to writing Hiding in Holland: 1942-1945, beginning with a research appointment at Oxford University. As a member of the Second Generation, one could say that I have lived this project my whole life. My knowledge of Hebrew and German are additional credentials. I turned to translators for the Dutch material.

**Readership**

My completed manuscript, Hiding in Holland: 1942-1945, uses the framework of “an individual in history.” It balances an understanding of the individual in a detailed context of political and social change. I think that scholars will be interested in the broad questions that I pose and the way I challenge some assumptions about the topics I tackle. I believe Hiding has a large potential audience among remaining Holocaust survivors, their children and grandchildren, Jewish readers as individuals and as members of book clubs, synagogues, Jewish organizations, Holocaust-related organizations, the general public, and more. A very broad segment of the public will be able to relate to the book because they have read Anne Frank’s diary. As mentioned above, my book balances hers by providing an instance of a person who hid and survived. The audience for Hiding is international, including readers in the U.S., the Netherlands, Germany and Israel, among other countries. I am working on projects with people in my father’s German hometown – Gunzenhausen. The mayor has invited me to come to Gunzenhausen and give talks. The archivist may create an exhibit based on Hiding that will display the multiple generations of my father’s family in the town.

Because I believe my writing is accessible and lively, Hiding should appeal to the general public as a trade book as well as to scholars. In other words, I believe my book can be marketed as a cross-over of trade and academic. Hiding also has the potential for being widely read because it brings to the fore a topic that - remarkably - has received sparse or even misleading attention in Holocaust studies, as I explained in the “Introduction “.

Moreover, because Hiding discusses many large themes through the telling of the story of one life, it can be a useful book for students in courses that deal with the Holocaust, Jewish history, or the Second World War. High school and college level teachers would likely want to assign this book to their students because it is full of new ideas and unusual stories, and requires no previous mastery of the topics at hand. My book balances well the life of one person with exploration of large-scale concepts.

**Comparable books** (English language only)

I have found no book that focuses on hiding as a general concept or hiding as an essential component of Jewish history. Similarly, I have found no book that deals with the role of non-Jews, in general, in the survival of the Jewish people. There are several books about individual rescuers and edited collections of multiple rescuers. I have not found a book that deals with Jewish hiding as a means of survival along with other strategies to survive. *Memoirs of people in hiding are unlike my book because they include little or no documentation, and they have only one vantage point, i.e., looking back at what happened from memory.* So, too, diaries of people in hiding are stuck in their present. Some books do not explain the phenomenon of hiding from the perspective of the *onderduiker*, but only from the perspective of a relative, friend or rescuer.

A book that illuminates the Holocaust experience of a very young Dutch Jewish child who survived Auschwitz and provides interesting insights into post-war Holland is Thomas Buergenthal’s A Lucky Child (Little, Brown, 2007). A related book is Rabbi Joseph Polak’s After the Holocaust the Bells Still Ring (Urim, 2015).

Bart Van Es’ The Cut-Out Girl, is an Oxford professor’s search for a Jewish child taken into the home of people with various motivations (Penguin, 2018). To understand the success of a variety of groups in Holland who organized to hide and rescue Jewish children, I recommend Bert Jan Flim’s Saving the Children: History of the Organized Effort to Rescue Jewish Children in the Netherlands, 1942-1945 (CDL Press, 2005). Bela Ruth Samuel Tenenholtz’s Land of Many Bridges (Amsterdam Publishers, 2022) is an excellent account of hiding in the Netherlands but with no documentation. Although my father was not a child in the Netherlands, he played a role in returning rescued children to their parents when the war ended.

To supplement Hiding, important books are available that deal with particular aspects of my father’s experiences. Perhaps the most important for understanding German Jewish life is Marion Kaplan’s Between Dignity and Despair (1996, Oxford). Mimi Schwartz’s Good Neighbors, Bad Times: Echoes of my Father’s German Village (Nebraska, 2008) focuses on the conflicting stories of Christian villagers about their helping or not helping Jews during the Nazi period. Another description of life in a Bavarian town, written from the perspective of second- and third-generation non-Jews is Anna Elisabeth Rosmus, Against the Stream: Growing up where Hitler Used to Live (South Carolina, 2002), previously made into the film, The Nasty Girl, 1990. An excellent book about urban hiding in Germany is Leonard Gross’ The Last Jews of Berlin (1982). It is now 40 years old. An international conference, “Faith in Humankind: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust,” (1984), culminated in the volume, The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust (NYU, 1986), that includes an essay by my father. Unfortunately, some of the material in his essay, such as the role of the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina, is not up-to-date. Important photographs and introductory essays accompany the 25 brief stories of The Courage to Care.

For information about Kristallnacht, see Alan Steinweiss, Kristallnacht 1938 (Harvard, 2009). The Buchenwald concentration camp, where my father was incarcerated, is described in many books, but again, these are single elements in the much larger arc of Hiding. Readers of material about Buchenwald (July 1937 - April 11, 1945) must keep in mind that my father was imprisoned when the camp was relatively new (November-December 1938) and not yet bent on Jewish annihilation.

To understand European Zionist pioneering youth at this time, one can benefit greatly from reading They Were Our Friends (published in Hebrew and English by *Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot* (Hebrew: Ghetto Fighters), 1990. *On this topic, Dutch/Israeli historian Jozeph Michman wrote: “The story of the rescue of hundreds of halutzim (i.e., the Zionist agricultural pioneers) is unique: there is nothing that resembles it in all the countries that were under Nazi occupation.”*

In addition to Anne Frank’s The Diary of a Young Girl (1947), one might be enlightened by reading Erna Berg’s Memoirs of Life Underground (2010), which, like the Frank diary, records the experience of *group* hiding. My father did not hide in a group but either with one other person or alone. Non-Jewish Miep Giese wrote a memoir (withAlison Leslie Gold) about her role in helping the Frank family and saving Anne’s diary (see Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family(Simon & Schuster, 2009). Corrie Ten Boom’s The Hiding Place (Bantam, 1971/1974) is a popular account of a deeply religious Christian woman who saved Jews in the Netherlands. Other materials such as Ank Faber-Chabot’s “A Dutchwoman who Sheltered Jews in the Second World War,” are chapter-length accounts in edited collections (see War and Women Across Continents, Berghahn, 2016), edited by Shirley Ardener, Fiona Armitage-Woodward and Lidia Sciama. But these books, other than Frank’s and Berg’s focus on rescuers, not on those who were hidden.

Memorbook: History of Dutch Jewry from the Renaissance to 1940 with 1100 illustrations and text by Mozes Heiman Gans (Bosch & Keuning, 1971/1977) is an enormous coffee-table book about Dutch Jewish history, useful for understanding the background of Jewish life before the German invasion in 1940. The History of the Jews in the Netherlands, edited by Blom, Fuks-Mansfeld and Schöffer (Littman, translated in 2007) is a useful overview of Dutch Jewish history and devotes two chapters (pp. 296-391) to the war years and “After the Second World War.” Dutch Jewish historian Jacob Presser’s Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry published in Dutch in 1965 (with many subsequently published translations) is the first and main reference work on the persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands under German Occupation. As the website of that book states, “Presser graphically recounts stories of persecution: the registration, stigmatization, segregation, isolation, spoliation, roundups, the temporary exemptions, life in the transit camps, deportation and, ultimately, extermination, but also stories of Jewish resistance, escape attempts, and *the process of going into hiding*.”

A 60-page booklet published in 1996, titled The Jews of Holland during the *Shoah* (Hebrew: Holocaust) and accompanying the permanent exhibition in The Ghetto Fighters’ House in Israel is an informative precis but only of the Dutch period described in Hiding not the preceding period of my father’s life in Germany. Bernard Wasserstein’s The Ambiguity of Virtue: Gertrude van Tijn and the Fate of the Dutch Jews (Harvard, 2014) shows how this Jewish woman was involved not only in creating organizations to rescue Jews, but in challenging the actions of the Jewish Council established by the Germans. It illustrates how she became a passionate Zionist, was imprisoned in Bergen-Belsen, was able to get to Palestine and wrote an extensive but never published report on what happened to the Jews of Holland.

Historian Werner Warmbrunn’s overview, The Dutch Under German Occupation, 1940-1945 (Stanford, 1963) is nearly 60 years old. Its index does not contain “onderduiker” or hiding and has but one chapter on Jews. He wrote, “…only a minority of the Jewish population attempted to avoid deportation by going underground. It has been estimated that 20,000 Jews, or fewer than one out of six persons slated for deportation, went into hiding and that 8,000 of these survived, half of them children.” While these numbers have withstood scrutiny for decades, I believe it is important to describe them differently, i.e. Jews in hiding were the Dutch Jews with the highest survival rate.

Louis de Jong, one of the world’s experts on the Netherlands during World War II, devoted only two pages (pp. 20-21) to the topic of hidden Jews in his short book, The Netherlands and Nazi Germany (1988). He also is the author of a 26-volume history of the Netherlands during the Occupation. These volumes should be seen as reference works. A recently published study - Daphne Geismar’s Invisible Years: A Family’s Collected Account of Separation and Survival during the Holocaust in the Netherlands (Godine, 2020) – is an artistic overview of the interconnection of hiding among a set of Dutch families. The Sisters of Auschwitz, “the true story of two Jewish sisters’ resistance in the heart of Nazi territory,” by Roxane van Iperen, details the complex story of *Jews who rescued other Jews* by hiding them during the German occupation of the Netherlands.

The two-volume Yad Vashem publication, The Encyclopedia of the Righteous among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust (2004), edited by Jozeph Michman and Bert Jan Flim, with the editors’ introductory essays, contains *the stories of all the documented Dutch rescuers until the publication date*. Although these volumes are essential to understanding the stories of rescue and survival of some Jews in the Netherlands, they are encyclopedic rather than an integrated narrative. These books are immensely valuable. The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust does not have an entry on hiding nor did I find the word “hiding” in the indices of some of the most important books written about the Holocaust by American scholars.

Novels about the Holocaust, especially Auschwitz, have become popular. Several are invaluable for their imaginative insights about the German Occupation of the Netherlands and the response of some Jews. Carl (female) Friedman’s harrowing book with the uncapitalized title, nightfather: a novel, presents post-war life through the eyes of a concentration camp returnee’s children. American Mary Dingee Fillmore’s An Address in Amsterdam (SheWritesPress, 2016) focuses on a courier like my mother; Dutchman Hans Keilson’s Comedy in a Minor Key (1947) (translated/reprinted by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), describes a couple who hid a Jew who died in their home; Israeli writer Emuna Elon’s, House on Endless Waters (Washington Square, 2016) is a recreation of the past from various vantage points. Dutchman Harry Mulisch’s The Assault (Random House, 1985) by “Holland’s most important post war writer,” and its film adaptation (1986), begin with the liberation, not the period in hiding.

In addition to The Assault, Dutch *films* about the German invasion and occupation of the Netherlands include A Bridge too Far (1977) about the stalled liberation of the Netherlands at Arnhem; Black Book (2006) about a Dutch Jewish woman who joined the Resistance; War in Wintertime (2008) about a teenage Dutch boy who joins the Resistance; Riphagen: The Untouchable (2016) which contains depictions of Jews in hiding and their vulnerability to exploitation by ruthless criminals; The Resistance Banker (2018) about a bank set up to aid the Resistance; and The Forgotten Battle (2020), about a fictitious battle in Northern Holland. For various purposes of entertainment and Dutch pride, many of these and others focus on the Dutch resistance to the Nazis.

**Additional information and Specifications**

1. A long-term project by students at Stockton University in New Jersey. See <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cda0b3fa008840409b5ef50cc6c13f83>. See also Jaap Cohen, “How Unique was the Secret Annex? People in Hiding in the Occupied Netherlands,” [https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/how-unique-was-secret-annex-people-hiding-occupied-rescuenetherland/](https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/how-unique-was-secret-annex-people-hiding-occupied-netherland/) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (eds.), The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization (Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)