



TEACHER'S GUIDE

# *The Wartime Escape*

MARGRET AND H.A. REY'S JOURNEY FROM FRANCE



*The Wartime Escape: Margret and H.A. Rey's Journey from France*

A Program of ExhibitsUSA, a national division of Mid-America Arts Alliance and  
**The National Endowment for the Arts**

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Text: Catherine Caughell, Frieda Miller

Design: Kazuko Kusumoto

Research: Laura Mehes

Copy Editing: Rome Fox

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Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

50 - 950 West 41st Avenue

Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7

604.264-0499 [info@vhec.org](mailto:info@vhec.org) [www.vhec.org](http://www.vhec.org)

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Cover image: Allan Drummond, *Escape from Paris*, 2005, modern reproduction of watercolor and ink on paper, 14 3/4 x 10 7/28 inches, courtesy Allan Drummond and Institute for Holocaust Education, Omaha, NE.

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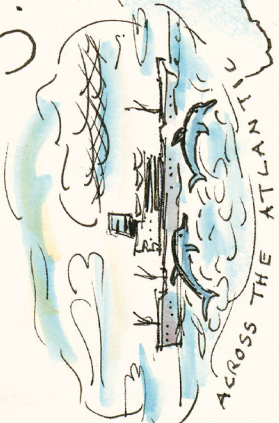




the  
**Sea  
Voyage**  
that saved  
  
**Curious George**



Lisbon: Going Aboard



Across the Atlantic



Waiting in Rio de Janeiro



New York: Curious George is Published



# Introduction

More than three generations of children have grown up reading the stories of an irrepressible little brown monkey known as “Curious George.” But few people know about the incredible journey made by his creators, Margret and H.A. Rey, to escape the Nazi invasion of Paris at the start of Second World War. Stashing a few precious belongings and manuscripts in their knapsacks and the baskets of their bicycles, the German Jewish couple fled Paris in June 1940, starting a five month odyssey by bike, train, and boat that would eventually bring them to the United States.

Beginning in the years prior to the war, the exhibit *The Wartime Escape: Margret and H.A. Rey’s Journey from France* explores the Reys’ early creative collaborations and traces how the story of Curious George spanned the wartime period. The monkey emerged as a character in one of the Reys’ pre-Second World War stories, and the manuscript that became *Curious George* was already in progress by 1939. However, wartime constraints on printing and the turmoil of the period prevented the original contract from being fulfilled. When the Reys were forced to flee Paris along with thousands of other refugees in advance of the German occupation, the manuscript and illustrations for the book were among the few personal possessions they managed to take with them. Escaping via Spain and Portugal, then across the Atlantic to Brazil, the Reys finally reached the United States in October 1940. A month later, they received a new contract from Houghton Mifflin for *The Adventures of Fifi*, later re-titled *The Adventures of Curious George*.

*The Wartime Escape* tells the story of the Reys’ journey, featuring 25 framed art prints by artist Allan Drummond and supplemental archival images from the holdings of the de Grummond Collection of Children’s Literature at the University of Southern Mississippi. The exhibition is based in part on the 2005 publication, *The Journey that Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey*, written by Louise Borden and illustrated by Allan Drummond (Houghton Mifflin Company, New York).

More than just the tale of the rousing escape from occupied France, this exhibition celebrates a timeless survival story, one that serves as a potent reminder of the power of human creativity and the cost when voices and visions are silenced by the impact of war.

This guide’s pre-visit readings and activities will prepare students for their visit to the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre and for their participation in the interactive, docent-led school program in which students will use Drummond’s illustrations to explore the topic of escape and finding refuge during the Holocaust. A number of post-visit activities expand upon the themes of escape and cultural loss during the Holocaust.

The activities are accompanied by a timeline, glossary and list of recommended resources. Teachers are encouraged to adapt material to suit their classroom needs and to allow for a variety of responses among students confronting the complexities of the Holocaust.

Adapted from *The Educational Programming Guide for Wartime Escape*. Copyright 2009 ExhibitsUSA, a national program of Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Image (left): Allan Drummond, *Endpapers – The Atlantic*, 2005, modern reproduction of watercolor and ink on paper, 15 1/4 x 22 3/8 inches, courtesy Allan Drummond and Institute for Holocaust Education, Omaha, NE.



## Pre-visit Activities

These activities are designed to prepare students for a visit to the exhibit, *Wartime Escape: Margret and H.A. Rey's Journey from France* at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. The activities will introduce students to Margret and H.A. Rey, the author and illustrator of the *Curious George* books and provide them with background information on the history of France during the Holocaust.

### READ & DISCUSS CURIOUS GEORGE

Before visiting the exhibit *Wartime Escape: Margret and H.A. Rey's Journey from France* students should become familiar with the *Curious George* children's book written and illustrated by the Reys.

Obtain a copy of *The Adventures of Curious George* (alternate title: *Curious George*) from a library or bookstore. Teachers with younger students or access to only one copy of the book may wish to read the story to students, while secondary teachers may wish to pass the book around for students to read independently prior to the lesson.

More than just a children's book, *Curious George* played a significant role in saving the lives of its creators, Margret and H.A. Rey, during the Holocaust. Students will learn more about this at the exhibit.

### QUESTIONS

- What distinguishes a children's book from an adult one? (simplicity of language, plot, use of illustrations, etc.)
- How many of you have read, or had *Curious George* read to you, when you were young? How old were you and what year was that? What do you remember about the story?
- *Curious George* was written in the 1930s, many decades before you would have encountered it as a child. What makes a children's book a classic, one that is loved and read by many generations? (engaging main character, exciting story, use of humour, educational content, use of language, etc.)



## STUDY FRANCE & THE HOLOCAUST

Students will gain some background knowledge about the history of antisemitism in France, the Nazi occupation of France and the role of Vichy France during the Holocaust. In addition, students will gain an appreciation of the obstacles that faced Jewish refugees trying to flee Nazi-occupied Europe.

Make copies of the **Student Reading: France & the Holocaust** and the **Student Anticipation Guide** worksheet for each student in the class.

### ANTICIPATION SET

As a pre-reading activity, have students complete the “Before Reading” column of the anticipation guide. Instruct students to indicate their position with regard to the statement beside it. Students should also include an explanation for their position within the box.

Have students read *France & the Holocaust*. After reading, ask them to review their initial responses to the statements in the anticipation set and respond again in the “After Reading” column. Students should include an explanation for their position using evidence from the text.

As a class, students discuss their anticipation set statements, their reasoning for their positions, and whether their initial position changed as a result of the reading.

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Margret and H.A. Rey were two German-born Jews who fled Nazi-occupied France. What factors might influence a person’s decision to escape? Alternately, to stay?
- What risks or obstacles did Jews trying to escape from Nazi-occupied countries face?
- What was Canada’s policy toward Jewish refugees?

*Image (left): Allan Drummond, Hans and Margaret at work and Chateau Feuga, 2005, modern reproduction of watercolor and ink on paper, 14 3/4 x 10 7/8 inches, courtesy Allan Drummond and Institute for Holocaust Education, Omaha, NE.*

## FRANCE & THE HOLOCAUST

### Student Anticipation Guide

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#### STATEMENT #1

Thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe found refuge in the United States and Canada.

#### BEFORE READING

Strongly agree    1    2    3    4    5    Strongly disagree

Comments:

#### AFTER READING

Strongly agree    1    2    3    4    5    Strongly disagree

Comments:

#### STATEMENT #2

French citizens actively resisted the Nazis during the German occupation of France.

#### BEFORE READING

Strongly agree    1    2    3    4    5    Strongly disagree

Comments:

#### AFTER READING

Strongly agree    1    2    3    4    5    Strongly disagree

Comments:



## FRANCE & THE HOLOCAUST

### Student Anticipation Guide

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#### STATEMENT #3

French Jews had full rights as citizens and were protected under French law during the war.

#### BEFORE READING

Strongly agree    1    2    3    4    5    Strongly disagree

Comments:

#### AFTER READING

Strongly agree    1    2    3    4    5    Strongly disagree

Comments:



Image (right): Allan Drummond, *Hans and Margaret at work and Chateau Feuga*, 2005, modern reproduction of watercolor and ink on paper, 14 3/4 x 10 7/8 inches, courtesy Allan Drummond and Institute for Holocaust Education, Omaha, NE.

## FRANCE & THE HOLOCAUST

### Student Reading

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#### JEWS IN FRANCE (1919-1939)

**Antisemitism**, the discrimination and persecution of Jews, had a long history in Europe. However, between the First and Second World Wars France became one of the few European countries to welcome Jewish immigrants. Many Jews moved to France from Eastern Europe. Paris became a centre of Jewish cultural life and home to many Jewish artists, politicians, and intellectuals.

In the 1930s, the number of **refugees** in France increased significantly, as many Jews fled Nazi Germany or the Spanish Civil War. This influx of Jewish immigrants caused France to reconsider its “open-door” policy. By 1939, the French government strictly limited Jewish **immigration** and established some refugee detention camps in southern France.

#### THE RISE OF NAZI GERMANY (1933-1939)

In January 1933, National Socialist (Nazi) leader Adolph Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. On March 23, 1933, the Enabling Act was enacted in the German Reichstag, turning the fragile democracy into a **dictatorship**. Also in March, the Nazis established the first concentration camp, Dachau, to imprison political dissidents.

The Nazi party encouraged antisemitism and **fascist** ideals. According to **Nazi** ideology, Germans and those of northern European descent were considered “**Aryans**” and members of the “master race.” Jews, Roma and Sinti (“Gypsies”), gays and lesbians, and the physically and mentally disabled, were classified as “inferior” and declared enemies of the German state. The Nazis excluded Jews from most professions, public organizations and educational institutions. In September 1935, the Nazis enacted the **Nuremberg Laws**, which stripped Jews of their citizenship.

On November 9, 1938, Jewish synagogues and businesses in Germany and Austria were attacked and hundreds of Jews arrested. This event, known as **Kristallnacht**, marked a new level of violence in the Nazis’ antisemitic policies. Thousands of German and Austrian Jews decided to flee.

#### SECOND WORLD WAR & VICHY FRANCE (1939-1945)

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and the Second World War began. France declared war on Germany along with the other **Allied** powers, including Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia.



## FRANCE & THE HOLOCAUST

### *Student Reading*

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In May 1940, the German army invaded Belgium, Holland, and France. In June, the French government surrendered and signed an **armistice** with the Nazis, which divided France into two parts. Northern France (the occupied zone) was placed under German control and southern France (the unoccupied zone) was placed under control of a new French government, called the Vichy regime.

The Vichy government **collaborated** with the occupying German forces and passed laws that discriminated against Jews. It helped the Nazis arrest and **deport** over 75,000 Jews from France to death camps such as **Auschwitz-Birkenau**.

By the end of 1941, the “Final Solution,” the Nazi policy of exterminating all Jews, was in place and mass deportations of Jews to the concentration camps had begun. By the end of the war, six million European Jews, including one and a half million children, had been murdered during the Holocaust.

### JEWISH REFUGEES

More than twelve million people, both Jews and non-Jews, fled Paris and other Northern French cities to escape the German forces. The refugees experienced crowded roads, food shortages, and few places to stay. While some were able to escape, others did not have the resources or **visas** necessary to leave France.

Margret and H.A. Rey, German Jews living in France at the time of the Nazi invasion, were among the refugees who fled Paris for the south of France. Because the Reys also held Brazilian passports, they were granted visas that allowed them to escape across the Spanish border and eventually to the United States.

Most Jewish refugees found the world’s doors closed to them. In 1938, thirty-two nations, including Canada, attended the Evian Conference to discuss the problem of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, but refused to increase Jewish immigration. In 1939, a shipload of German Jewish refugees aboard the S.S. St. Louis, was refused sanctuary in Canada and forced to return to Europe. During the Holocaust, Canada admitted only approximately 5,000 Jews — one of the worst records of any of the world’s refugee-receiving countries.

### FRENCH RESISTANCE

There was a small, but active, French and Jewish resistance in France that opposed the occupying German forces. They hid or smuggled many Jews, especially children, to safety and sabotaged Nazi operations. Approximately 2% of the French population actively resisted the Nazi occupation and up to 10% of people supported the Resistance. However, a majority of French citizens were either bystanders or **collaborated** with the Nazis and the Vichy government in the persecution of Jews.

# Post-visit Activities

These activities are designed to extend student learning following a visit to the exhibit, *The Wartime Escape: Margret and H.A. Rey's Journey from France*.

## CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF SURVIVORS

The Reys were only two of the many Jews who fled Nazi-occupied Europe during the Holocaust and subsequently made significant contributions to their respective fields. In this activity, students will learn about the cultural or scientific contributions of other Holocaust survivors who escaped Europe between 1933 and 1945.

Divide students into four expert groups (Marc Chagall, Albert Einstein, Anna Freud, and Cornelia Oberlander). Distribute copies of one of the **Escapee Profiles** to students in each group. Have students read the profiles.

### EXPERT GROUP DISCUSSION:

- What motivated the person's decision to escape?
- Describe the people, events or possessions that contributed to the success of their escape.
- What contributions (e.g. cultural, scientific, etc.) did this person make to society after their escape?

Have students form new mixed groups, with at least one representative of each profile in each group.

### MIXED GROUP DISCUSSION:

- What experiences did the escapees have in common?
- How did the different stories of escape contribute to your understanding of the Holocaust?
- Only a small percentage of Jews were able to escape Nazi-occupied Europe. Consider the cultural and scientific contributions that were lost to the world by the death of six million Jews. Why is it important to consider cultural and scientific losses, not just the loss of lives and property, when assessing the impact of genocide?



## PERSONAL ARTEFACTS AS PRIMARY SOURCE EVIDENCE

Author Louise Borden used several primary sources to research the Reys' escape, which included photographs, identification cards, agendas, original artwork, a ship's passenger list, telegrams, letters, royalty cheques and passports. Divide students into eight groups. Distribute a copy of one of the artefacts listed under **De Grummond Children's Literature Digital Collection Resources** and a copy of the **Holocaust Timeline** to each group. Have students examine their artefact.

### GROUP DISCUSSION:

- What type of artefact is it? Who do you think created it and for what purpose?
- What role did it play in the Reys' escape? What significance did it have?
- Plot the date of the artefact on the **Holocaust Timeline**. How is the significance of the artefact affected by your knowledge of what was going on during the Holocaust at the time?

### GROUPS SHARE THEIR FINDINGS WITH THE CLASS AND DISCUSS:

- What artefact did you find most interesting? Why?
- How do all of these artefacts together contribute to our understanding of the Holocaust?
- How are artefacts like these helpful to biographers and historians

### EXTENSION

Ask students to imagine that someone is writing a biography about them. Have students list some primary sources that relate to their life histories that an author or historian could use in their research.

Ask students to bring in some of their personal "artefacts" to share in small groups. Each group should make a list of the items and explain what each artefact reveals about that person.

### DISCUSS:

- What do these primary sources reveal about our contemporary society?
- How might a future historian be able to learn from these artefacts?
- What primary sources would it be important for you to collect and preserve from now on to help document your life experiences?

## PLIGHT OF REFUGEES

War and genocide often precipitate the widespread displacement of people. The refugee crisis that occurred in Europe during the Second World War and the Holocaust is only one such example.

RESEARCH ANOTHER GROUP FORCED TO FLEE WAR OR GENOCIDE.  
CONSIDER:

- The demographics of the group
- The circumstances that caused them to flee (push factors)
- Obstacles and/or risks they faced while escaping
- Where they fled to and how they were received (pull factors)

**Note:** If the crisis is on-going, students may also suggest ways that people can become involved or help those in need.

### EXTENSION

Create an informative poster to draw awareness to this crisis. Display these posters in your classroom or school.

# Resources

## DE GRUMMOND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE DIGITAL COLLECTION RESOURCES

- Photograph** *H.A. Rey on a Balcony in Paris; circa 1935-1940*  
[http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=326&CISOBX=1&REC=12](http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=326&CISOBX=1&REC=12)
- Identification Card** *Republique Francaise Carte d'Identite, Margret Rey; December 1937*  
<http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=49&REC=2>
- Agenda** *Agenda, Mai; May 29-31, 1940*  
[http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=512&CISOBX=1&REC=17](http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=512&CISOBX=1&REC=17)
- Original Artwork** *Curious George original watercolor; 1940*  
<http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=10&REC=19>
- Ship's Passenger List** *Companhis Nacional de Navegao: Lista dos Passageiros do Paquete Angola; First-class Passenger List; June-July 1940*  
[http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=298&CISOBX=1&REC=1](http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=298&CISOBX=1&REC=1)
- Telegram** *Telegram from Rio de Janeiro; circa June-July 1940*  
[http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=334&CISOBX=1&REC=2](http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=334&CISOBX=1&REC=2)
- Letter** *Letter, [W.S. Cowell] to H.A. Rey; 4 July 1940*  
[http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=498&CISOBX=1&REC=12](http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=498&CISOBX=1&REC=12)
- Royalty Cheque** *First royalty check statement; 31 October 1941*  
[http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=403&CISOBX=1&REC=1](http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=403&CISOBX=1&REC=1)
- Passport** *Dual Passport; May 1942*  
[http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=478&CISOBX=1&REC=1](http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/rey&CISOPTR=478&CISOBX=1&REC=1)

## *Additional Resources*

1. *Love Hate and Propaganda – CBC mini-series*  
(Episode 4, from 19:00-28:30mins)  
  
[http://www.cbc.ca/video/#/Shows/Doc\\_Zone/Love\\_Hate\\_and\\_Propaganda/1411976690/ID=1451872691](http://www.cbc.ca/video/#/Shows/Doc_Zone/Love_Hate_and_Propaganda/1411976690/ID=1451872691)
2. *“From Democracy to Deportation: The Jews of France from the Revolution to the Holocaust”* by Jack Mertzger and Yael Weinstock Mashbaum  
  
[http://www1.yadvashem.org.il/yv/en/education/newsletter/24/main\\_article.asp](http://www1.yadvashem.org.il/yv/en/education/newsletter/24/main_article.asp)
3. Nemirovsky, Irene. *Suite Francaise*. Paris, Denoel, 2004.
4. Rosnay, de Tatiana. *Sarah’s Key*. New York, St. Martin’s Press, 2008.



# Escapee Profiles



## ANNA FREUD

Anna Freud was the youngest daughter of famed psychoanalyst Dr. Sigmund Freud and famous for her work in children's developmental psychoanalysis. She was born in Vienna in 1895, and began to study psychoanalysis, a method of analyzing the mind and treating emotional disorders, in 1918. She began her own practice in 1923 and soon became highly regarded in the field, focusing her work on children. In 1935, she became the Director of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Training Institute. She published

her most famous work, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*, in 1936.

In March 1938, the Nazis annexed Austria incorporating it into Germany. As a prominent Jewish family, the Freuds were soon targeted by the Nazis, who interrogated Anna and burned many of the family's books at one of the notorious public book burning rallies. As a result, the family decided to flee Germany for England. With the help of influential family friends and a Nazi officer who admired the work of her father, Anna was able to secure and pay for the necessary exit visas.

By June 1938, the family was safely in London. There, Anna Freud continued her work in the field of child development and children's charities, initiating many charitable works throughout her life. Universities across the world awarded her many honorary doctorates and Queen Elizabeth II awarded her an Order of the British Empire in 1967. Anna Freud passed away in London in 1982.



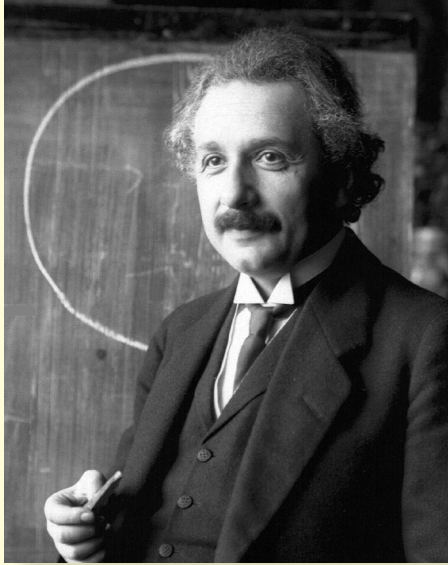
## MARC CHAGALL

Marc Chagall was a Russian-French-Jewish painter born in Vitebsk, Russia in 1887. He studied art, and lived in Russia, France, and Germany before settling in France before the Second World War. Chagall was a prolific painter, a prominent figure in the modernist art movement, and one of the best-known Jewish artists of his time. He was known for his folk-inspired style, use of colour and his work explored themes related to life memories, fantasy, and Jewish identity.

Chagall was living in Gordes, France when the German army invaded in May 1940. Gordes came under the control of the Vichy Government, which later collaborated with Nazi Germany. In 1940, the Vichy Government passed the "Statute on Jews," which limited the freedoms of Jews, and denied many Jews French citizenship. This put Chagall and his family in danger.

The Fund for Jewish Refugee Writers, an American organization that was working to rescue prominent Jewish intellectuals and artists, placed Chagall on a list of Jews who should be rescued from Europe. They persuaded the Museum of Modern Art in New York City to invite Chagall to exhibit his works there. This allowed the Fund to secure Chagall a visa to the United States. With the help of American rescuer Varian Fry, Chagall crossed the French-Spanish border on May 7, 1941, arrived in Lisbon, Portugal on May 11, 1941, and then boarded a ship for New York City.

After the war in 1948, Chagall returned to France where he lived until his death in 1985. Chagall worked in many artistic mediums from painting and sculpture to stained glass and tapestry. He painted the well-known ceiling of the Paris Opera House in the mid-1960s, and designed stained glass windows for the UN building in New York, for the Hadassah University Medical Centre in Jerusalem and for various churches across Europe.



## ALBERT EINSTEIN

Albert Einstein was born March 14, 1879, in Ulm, Germany, to Jewish parents. Einstein attended a polytechnic school in Zurich, Switzerland, where he was considered to be a poor student. Yet, he went on to become the most well known physicist of the twentieth century. He obtained a doctorate degree in 1905 and in 1915, published the Theory of Relativity, which proved that time, space and gravitation have no separate existence from matter. Before the Second World War, Einstein was already a famous physicist, and spoke at universities and institutes internationally.

In 1921, he won the Nobel Peace Prize for Physics.

By the time the Nazis came to power in 1933, Einstein was Director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Physical Institute and a professor at the University of Berlin, but teaching in California as a visiting professor at the time. The Nazis and their supporters denounced Einstein's ideas as "Jewish physics," organized the burning of his books, and published a picture of him in the paper with the words, "Not Yet Hanged."

While returning to Germany from his stay in California, Einstein made the decision to stop in Belgium and renounce his German citizenship. Then, aided by a British Member of Parliament, he left for London where he spent several months advocating for Jewish refugees. In October 1933, he sailed for the United States, where he became a professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, New Jersey and later became an American citizen in 1940. His theories contributed to the development of the atomic bomb, but as a pacifist, Einstein did not support it. He was offered the Presidency of Israel in 1952, but declined, continuing his scientific work on his Theory of Relativity until his death in 1955.

## CORNELIA OBERLANDER

Cornelia Oberlander is an acclaimed landscape architect who lives in Vancouver, British Columbia. She was born in Muelheim-Ruhr, Germany in 1921, to a prominent Jewish family. When she was 15, she was no longer able to attend high school due to Nazi laws that restricted the number of Jewish students in public schools.



*In November 1938 the Nazis made it very hard for my mother, Beate Hahn, to obtain a passport, while all Hahns had already emigrated to Great Britain. Finally, after Kristallnacht, November 9, 1938, my mother managed to obtain an "invitation" from Herr Himmler. She was asked to come to his bunker to have the meeting and he asked her why she wanted to emigrate. "Well," my mother replied, "I want my children to have an education with many languages." It was her good fortune that she could reply to Himmler's questions. Finally he demanded DM 240,000 for our three passports. If she could produce this money by 3:00 p.m. he would give us the passports. She produced the money from her blocked bank account and lo and behold we had our passports. Now the question, where to store these precious documents until we leave? Since we had non-quota visas to America, I suggested the US Consulate would be the right place.*

*Uncle Kurt had heard about all these difficulties and sent his friend Sir Alexander Lawrence to attend a law conference in Leipzig. Somehow, Sir Alexander Lawrence was standing by to help us out of Germany, as directed by Uncle Kurt. We picked him up on November 23, 1938, at the Adlon Hotel and immediately went to the Bahnhof Zoo to train a train to Ostende. Sir Alexander Lawrence accompanied us. As we got to the border, the Nazis got on the train and yelled "Mrs. Hahn get out!" Sir Alexander Lawrence rose from his seat and involved the SS man in a conversation – "Why should this lady get out?" As they were conversing the train started to move and the SS man had to jump out of the window. Thus we breathed a sigh of relief, and so it was Uncle Kurt's life-saving mission that saved us from destruction.*

The family arrived in the United States in 1939, and settled in New Hampshire. Cornelia Oberlander studied landscape architecture at Smith College, and then at Harvard University. In 1953, she moved to Vancouver with her husband, Peter Oberlander. She became a pioneer in the field of landscape architecture and was one of the first prominent women in the profession. Among her most well known projects are the grounds of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, the rooftop gardens at Robson Square in Vancouver, the Vancouver Convention Centre and the Vancouver Public Library. She also designed the courtyard of the New York Times building in New York City and the landscape of the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, as well over 70 playgrounds nationwide. She has received many awards for her work including the Order of Canada and the Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe Award, the highest award of the International Federation of Landscape Architects.

Excerpt from "Memories of Kurt Hahn" by Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, 2011. Essay part of a booklet produced by Cornelia Hahn Oberlander in June 2011 entitled, "Hahn Family: For the Occasion of Kurt Hahn's 125th Birthday Anniversary, June 5, 2011."



# Timeline

## 1898

SEPTEMBER 16

Hans Augusto (H.A.) Reyersbach is born in Hamburg, Germany.

## 1906

MAY 16

Margarete Waldstein is born in Hamburg, Germany.

## 1925

H.A. Reyersbach moves to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He works selling kitchen sinks and bathtubs, and often travels up the Amazon River, drawing the monkeys that he sees living in the trees.

## 1933

JANUARY 30

Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany by President von Hindenburg.

APRIL

Nazis begin to persecute Jews in Germany. The first state-directed boycott of Jewish shops and businesses takes place on April 1. Jews are excluded from civil service, medical professions and the arts. Schools, universities and athletic clubs are Aryanized. Jewish children are denied access to public education.

## 1935

Margarete Waldstein moves to Rio de Janeiro, and begins working in an advertising firm. She meets H.A. Reyersbach.

AUGUST

Margarete and Hans Augusto get married. He changes his name to H.A. Rey, and she changes her's to Margret Rey. They live in Rio de Janeiro with two pet monkeys.

## 1935

SEPTEMBER 15

“Nuremberg Laws,” anti-Jewish racial laws, enacted. Jews lose the right to German citizenship and to marry Aryans.

## 1935-1939

The Reys go to Paris, France for their honeymoon and end up staying for more than four years. During this time they begin to develop a character they call *Fifi*, who will eventually become *Curious George*.

## 1939

SEPTEMBER 1

The Second World War begins.

## 1940

APRIL

The Reys sign a contract for *Fifi* with a French publisher, who gives them a small advance of money.

MAY 10

Germany invades Western Europe, attacking Belgium and Holland as well as France. There are 350,000 Jews living in France at the time, 75,000 of whom are refugees who have already escaped Nazi persecution.

MAY 23

The Reys begin to make preparations to flee France.

JUNE 11

The Reys attempt to buy a pair of bicycles, but all the shopkeeper has left is a tandem bike. When their attempts to ride it fail, H.A. builds two bicycles out of spare bicycle parts. Margret makes final preparations, making sure to pack the drawings of *The Adventures of Fifi*.

JUNE 12-14

The Reys flee Paris by bicycle, stopping over in the towns of Étampes and Aquebouille, before arriving in Orleans. There, they board a train to Bayonne

# 1940

JUNE 14

Paris falls to the invading German army, and the Nazi flag is flown from the Eiffel Tower. German planes attack Étampes and Orleans that night.

JUNE 16-21

The Reys arrive in Bayonne, south of Paris. In nearby Biarritz, they receive the Portuguese visas that will allow them to travel to Lisbon, Portugal. Visas in hand, they continue on to the border town of Hendaye, where they sell their bikes and board a train for Spain.

JUNE 22-25

France signs an armistice with Germany. Under the terms of the armistice, Germany occupies the North and West of France, which is administered as an occupied zone along with Belgium. The South and East of France remain unoccupied, and are administered by a French government (the Vichy Government), with their headquarters in Vichy, France. Although the Vichy government is officially neutral, in reality they collaborate closely with the Nazis.

JUNE 23

The Reys arrive in Portugal, via Spain. Portugal is a neutral country, and they are therefore safe from the Nazi advance.

JULY 21 - AUGUST 4

The Reys board the S.S. *Angola*, bound for Rio de Janeiro.

OCTOBER

The Reys board a ship bound for New York City. There, the Reys make their new home for the next 23 years.

OCTOBER 1940 - JUNE 1941

The Vichy Government passes the “Statute on Jews,” modeled on Nazi Germany’s Nuremberg Laws. These exclude Jews from public life and bar them from employment in the military, industry, commerce, civil service, law, medicine and education.

## 1941

*Fifi's* name is changed to *Curious George*, and American publisher Houghton Mifflin publishes *Curious George*, the first of many stories about the curious little monkey.

AUGUST

The German Security Police establish the Drancy camp in a Northeast suburb of Paris. Initially an internment camp, in the summer of 1942 it becomes the major transit camp for the deportation of Jews from France to extermination camps in Eastern Europe, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau. Approximately 70,000 French and foreign Jews pass through Drancy between 1941 and 1944.

## 1942

JANUARY 20

Nazi leaders meet at the Wannsee Conference in a suburb of Berlin to discuss the "Final Solution," the plan to murder all the Jews of Europe. At the end of March, the first Jews are deported to Auschwitz, in May, Jews are forced to wear the yellow star and by November, 42,000 Jews have been deported to concentration camps from France.

JULY

French police force 13,000 Jews living in Paris into the Velodrome d'Hiver sport arena where they are held for several days without food or water. They are eventually deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau via Drancy.

NOVEMBER

Germany occupies the Vichy "Free Zone" in the South and East of France. Deportations of Jews and political dissidents to concentration and work camps continue. Over the course of the Holocaust, 77,000 Jews deported from France perish, two thirds of whom are foreign-born Jews, just like the Reys.

## 1944

JUNE 6

D-Day. Allied forces invade Normandy, France.



## 1944

JUNE - AUGUST

Allied forces continue to fight across France, slowly breaking out of Normandy and landing in the South of France. French-born and foreign Jews continue to be deported to extermination camps.

AUGUST 15-16

German authorities in charge of Drancy flee as Allied troops approach. The camp is taken over by the French Red Cross, who care for the 1,500 remaining prisoners.

AUGUST 25

Paris is liberated by Allied forces.

## 1944-1945

Soviet and Allied troops liberate concentration and extermination camps throughout Eastern Europe and Germany.

## 1945

MAY 8

Victory in Europe (VE) Day, the official end of World War II in Europe.

# Glossary

<b>Ally</b>	A state that formally cooperates with another state for military or other purposes.
<b>Antisemitism</b>	A form of racism related to the discrimination and persecution of Jews. The term came into widespread use in the 1870s. Traditional antisemitism is based on religious discrimination against Jews. However, political and racial antisemitism developed in the 1800s, as Jews were blamed for changing social and political structures. Racial antisemitism referred to Jews as a “race” that were inferior on the evolutionary scale, and created false negative stereotypes of Jews that blamed them for the social and political problems.
<b>Armistice</b>	An agreement between two warring countries that establishes a truce and stops fighting. There are usually certain conditions imposed on one or both parties. France and Germany signed an armistice on June 22, 1940 that gave Germany control over northwest France as an “occupied zone,” and established the Vichy Government in southeast France.
<b>Aryan</b>	Term used in Nazi Germany to refer to non-Jewish and non-Gypsy Caucasians. Northern Europeans with especially “Nordic” features such as blonde hair and blue eyes were considered by so-called race scientists to be the most superior of Aryans, members of a “master race.”
<b>Auschwitz-Birkenau</b>	The largest of all Nazi concentration camps, located in Oswiecim, Poland. It was expanded in 1942 to include the extermination camp – Birkenau (Auschwitz II) and the labour camp – Buna-Monowitz (Auschwitz III). Approximately 1.1 to 1.6 million Jews and 100,000 other victims were murdered or died at Auschwitz.
<b>Collaborators</b>	Citizens of nations occupied by Germany who helped the Nazi regime in their murder of European Jews and other Nazi racial policies. This collaboration was critical in implementing the “Final Solution,” and collaborators committed some of the worst atrocities of the Holocaust. Antisemitism, nationalism, ethnic hatred, anti-communism, and opportunism all induced ordinary citizens to become collaborators.
<b>Cultural Loss</b>	The loss of language, art, music, writing, poetry, medicine, designs, inventions or other facets of culture that are lost when members of that culture are persecuted and killed.

*Image (right): Allan Drummond, Orleans Station, 2005, modern reproduction of watercolor and ink on paper, 15 1/4 x 22 3/8 inches, courtesy Allan Drummond and Institute for Holocaust Education, Omaha, NE.*

## Deportation

Part of the Nazi program to remove Jews from Germany, increasing the living space for ethnic Germans. Initially an effort to rid German-occupied land of Jews, deportation eventually became a means to deliver Jews to concentration camps and implement the “Final Solution.”

## Dictator

Someone who rules a country absolutely, and often oppressively.

## Fascism

Form of government based on a one-party dictatorship, militarism, ultra-nationalism, absolute conformity and intolerance for civil and human rights.

## Immigration

The act of coming to a new country to take up permanent residence there.

## Kristallnacht

The “Night of Broken Glass,” the Nazi orchestrated attack against Jewish citizens in Germany and Austria on November 9, 1938. Hundreds of synagogues were burned, thousands of Jewish businesses destroyed and 30,000 Jews were imprisoned in concentration camps. The events marked an escalation in the Nazi persecution of Jews.

## Nazism

The ideology of the National Socialist German Worker’s Party and the party’s system of rule from 1933-1945. Also a form of fascism. The ideology opposed liberalism, parliamentary democracy, communism, and socialism.

## Nuremburg Laws

Anti-Jewish legislation announced during a Nazi party rally in Nuremburg, Germany on September 15, 1935. The first of a long series of decrees stripped Jews of their German citizenship, defined a Jew based on the number of Jewish grandparents he/she had, prohibited marriage and sexual relationships between Jews and Germans, prohibited the hiring of German maids under the age of forty-five by Jews, and forbid Jews to raise the German flag.

## Refugees

Persons who flee their home country in search of safety during times of war, political oppression, or religious persecution.

## Visa

An endorsement on a passport, granting official entry into, or passage through, a country.

