

Echoing Voices: Anne-Willem Meijer

Key Highlights of Anne-Willem Meijer's Story

- Provides the perspective of a non-Jewish boy who participated in resistance activities.
- Describes Nazi occupation of Holland and anti-Jewish legislation.
- Anne-Willem's internment in Vught and his family's murder shows how brutal the Gestapo were to individuals and groups who helped Jews.
- Illustrates that anyone can make a difference, no matter one's age. Anne-Willem was only 11 years old when he started acting as a "runner" and delivering ration cards.
- Describes the complexity of the camp structure including:
 - Concentration Camps - a camp in which people are detained or confined, usually under harsh conditions and without regard to legal norms of arrest and imprisonment that are acceptable in a constitutional democracy.
 - Extermination Camps – also known as death camps, were designed and built almost exclusively for murder by asphyxiation with poison gas or by shooting. German SS and police murdered nearly 2,700,000 Jews in death camps. There were six: Belzec, Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor, Birkenau, and Majdanek.
 - Transit Camps – set up to temporarily hold prisoners who were to be deported to extermination or concentration camps.
- Risking his life, Anne-Willem escaped Vught by being smuggled out with the trash.
- Describes the heartbreaking process of returning home to find that he and three sisters, out of 19 siblings, were the only survivors of his immediate family.
- Later, Anne-Willem discovered that his family had also helped hide Jews and that is why they were murdered.
- Process of immigrating to the United States and rebuilding one's life.

Suitcase Contents

- Registration Notice; Jews were required to register with the mayor's office and pay a legal fee.
- News Leaflet; "Het Joodsche Weekblad", issued by the Amsterdam Jewish community to announce that Jews were arrested in Amsterdam and deported to labor camps in Germany.
- Bicycle Handlebars; represents the bicycle that Anne-Willem rode to deliver ration coupons to families who were hiding Jews.
- Dutch ration Coupon; represents the ration coupon that Anne-Willem worked with Corrie ten Boom to deliver to families who were hiding Jews.
- Wooden Clogs; represents the clogs that were given to Anne-Willem by his father when he was a boy. Clogs were a common footwear in the Netherlands. During the Holocaust, clogs were worn in some concentration camps.
- Photograph; post-war, Anne-Willem with his wife, Josephine, and children, Lambertus, Pieter, William, Nancy, Robert, and Theresa.
- Photograph; post-war, Anne-Willem with a motorcycle. After the war, he attended a trade school and became a mechanic.
- Photograph; post-war, Anne-Willem with his wife, Josephine.
- Photograph; post-war, Anne-Willem's sister Hanni or Harmuke.