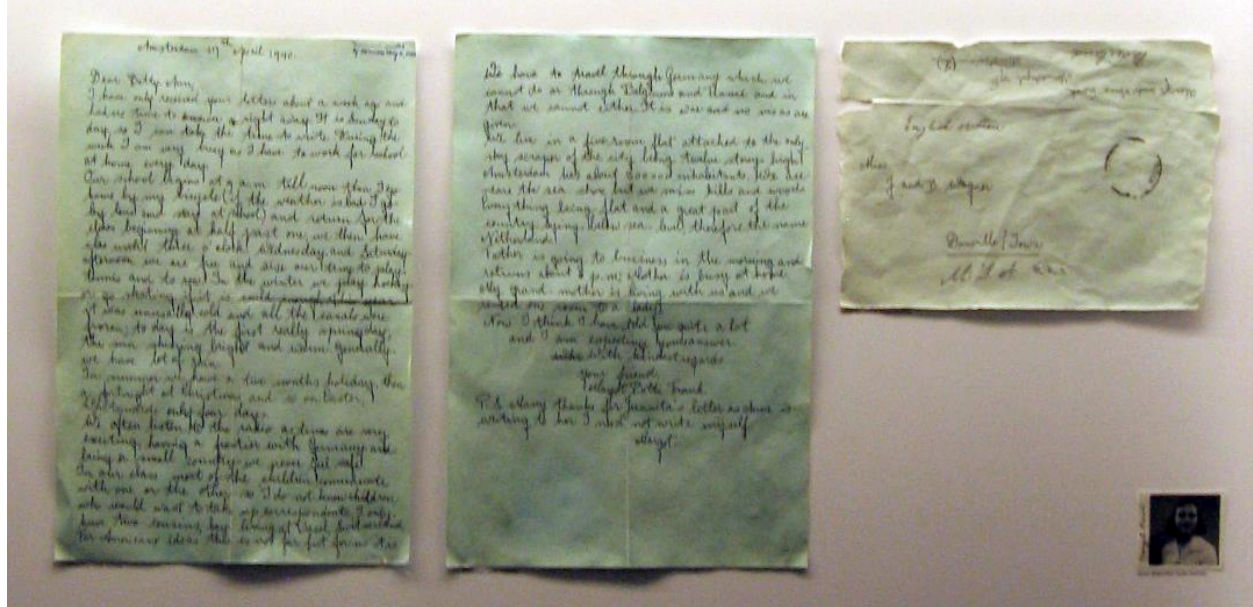


Anne and Margot Frank's Pen Pal Letters



In the Fall of 1939, in Danville, Iowa, ten-year-old Juanita Jane Wagner picked a name from a list of pen pals. Her teacher, Miss Birdie Mathews, had visited the Netherlands and brought back names and addresses of Dutch children for a pen pal project. The name of Juanita's pen pal was Anne Frank, also ten years old.

Juanita promptly wrote Anne and told her about Danville, her name, her family, in particular her sister Betty, and life on the farm. Eagerly, Juanita waited for a reply, which finally arrived in February or March (1940).

When Juanita and Anne realized that they each had an older sister about the same age, they arranged for Betty and Margot, Anne's sister, to also become pen pals.

The only existing letters from the correspondence between the sisters in Danville and Amsterdam are Anne's letter to Juanita (April 29, 1940) pictured above and Margot's letter to Betty (April 27, 1940). Both letters came in the same envelope, addressed to "Miss J and B Wagner."

Both Anne and Margot wrote their letters in English. It is believed that they wrote their first draft in Dutch and that their father, Otto Frank, translated the words to English. He then had his daughters rewrite their letters in English. Also included with their letters were little photographs of themselves and a picture postcard from Amsterdam. They are also exhibited here.

Juanita and Betty were thrilled to hear from their Dutch pen pals. They wrote back immediately and sent snapshots of themselves. Again they anxiously waited for mail from Amsterdam.

A couple of weeks later (May 10, 1940), the Nazis invaded the Netherlands. The Dutch fought back, but, in four days, they surrendered to Germany.

As their teachers spoke about the war, Betty and Juanita worried about Anne and Margot. Were they safe? Were they alive? They kept hoping for news. But no more letters came.



The page created by Anne Frank in her friend's "Poesie" autograph album

"Pluck Roses on Earth and Forget Me Not." Anne Frank wrote this popular rhyme in her friend, Henny de Bie-Scheerder's birthday autograph book of poems. It was March 4, 1940, before Nazis had invaded the Netherlands where she lived. But in retrospect, it is filled with irony and meaning.



Reproduction of the Original Diary

A reproduction of the original diary that Anne began to write on her 13th birthday while in hiding.



Facsimile of Handwritten Loose-Leaf Sheets

8 pages of loose-leaf sheets written by Anne are among the archives on display throughout the exhibit.

The letters are on permanent display at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles in the "Anne" exhibit which also houses more original artifacts and information about the life of Anne Frank.