

Lucas Haddock

10th Grade

Caddo Magnet High School

Teacher: Ms. Ayers

At some point in our lives, we will all be forced to make a decision, to choose between what is right and what is wrong. Sometimes, choosing to do the right thing can involve putting yourself or others at a great risk. It can be very difficult to stand up and do the right thing in the face of danger, but many people are able to find courage no matter the costs. Anemmie Wolff, who was a German photographer during the Holocaust, was one of these brave people.

Anemmie Wolff led a fairly normal and peaceful life in Amsterdam for about thirty years. She was not born as a Jew, but later married a Jewish architect named Helmuth Wolff. She and Helmuth started a photo studio in Amsterdam together, and they filled it with their photos of the city. They began to travel abroad, taking pictures of the places they traveled to, such as Morocco and Paris. Together, they organized a successful exposition in Amsterdam after creating their own newspaper. Life was going well for Anemmie and Helmuth, but that all changed when the Nazis rose to power.

Anemmie and Helmuth were still living in the Netherlands when the Nazi armies invaded in May of 1940. Helmuth was Jewish, which meant he was subject to the persecution seen by all Jews living in Europe at the time. Hoping to avoid the terrible things happening to fellow Jews in the area, Anemmie and Helmuth attempted suicide together. Helmuth was successful in his suicide attempt, but luckily Anemmie survived. She carried on her work, but shifted from photos of the city to photos of people. This shift to taking people's portraits laid the groundwork for the work she would do during the Nazi's rule.

People during the Holocaust era resisted the Nazis in many ways, and Anemmie had her own unique way of defying the Nazis. The most common methods of protest and resistance include violence, public rallies, or even hiding Jews and helping them escape, but Anemmie helped her Jewish neighbors through her photography. During this time most of her clients were Jews, and they came to her asking for portrait photographs. These portraits had a variety of uses during the Holocaust, such as passport photos, falsifying documents, or simply photographs to remember people by. The work she did was highly illegal under Nazi rule, and if she were caught she could have been put to death. Anemmie refused to be oppressed by the Nazis, and was willing to risk her own life to help her friends during this terrible event.

Anemmie Wolff can serve as an example of how to overcome the struggles in your life and help those around you during their own hardships. Risking your safety for the betterment of others and doing what is right is always a daunting task when faced with such intimidating enemies. Following Anemmie's example of selflessness can help ensure tragedies like the Holocaust stay a part of the past.

Works Cited:

1. "Almost Lost in History." Almost Lost in History - Jewish Cultural Quarter, jck.nl/en/exhibition/almost-lost-history.
2. Lost Stories, Found Images Study Guide « Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, uvw.ilholocaustmuseum.org/lost-stories-studyh
3. Realityweb. "Annemie and Helmuth Wolff Foundation." SAHW- Stichting Annemie en Helmuth Wolff, www.stichtingwolff.nl/english.html.