

At fifteen years old, Clara Kramer hid in an underground bunker for twenty months. Much like Anne Frank, she kept a diary while she was hiding, and it is now a prized possession of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Kramer endured so much during her teenage years and made sure that the world knew the horrors of the Holocaust.

Clara Kramer was born in 1927 in Zolkiew, Poland. She had two sisters, Mania and Naomi and one brother, Alex (Anderson). In 1942, the Germans invaded Zolkiew and her family decided to dig an underground bunker for them and eighteen others to hide in. They were hidden by Valentin Beck and his family who were Christians. Little did they know they would be hiding for twenty months, almost two years.

During those twenty months, Clara's mother wanted her to record each day's events on paper. Valentin Beck would go down into the crawl space each day and provide her with a paper and pencil (Anderson). In this diary, which is now in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, she recorded what it was like to sit in that small space with eighteen other people everyday. "When I was fifteen, I never thought I would see sixteen. Each day is a gift, so you have to use it (Kramer)". At one point during these twenty months, her sister, Mania, left the bunker and was shot by Germans. Months later, the war had ended. Clara and her family were placed in a displaced persons camp. There, she met her husband, Sol.

Eventually, Clara and Sol were allowed to go to the United States. They moved to Elizabeth, New Jersey and stayed there for the rest of their lives. Clara had two sons, Eli and Phillip. She and Sol both co-founded the Holocaust Resource Center. In 2009, Clara wrote and published her book, *Clara's War*. She described her experience and the horrific things that were happening while she and the others hid. She died on September 11, 2018. She will always be remembered by those whose lives were changed by reading her account of the Holocaust.

Clara's story really informed me more about what people did to try and avoid concentration camps. Before this, I really only knew about Anne Frank and Elie Weizel, but I learned that there are many more interesting stories about lesser known holocaust victims. I cannot fathom ever being in an underground bunker with eighteen other people for almost two years and never seeing the light of day once. She truly went through so much and we are blessed that she was willing to share her story. This story just made me think so much more about the lives that were affected by the Holocaust.

Ultimately, Clara Kramer endured a ton and graced the whole world with a book about her struggles. I aspire to be as strong as her as I grow up.