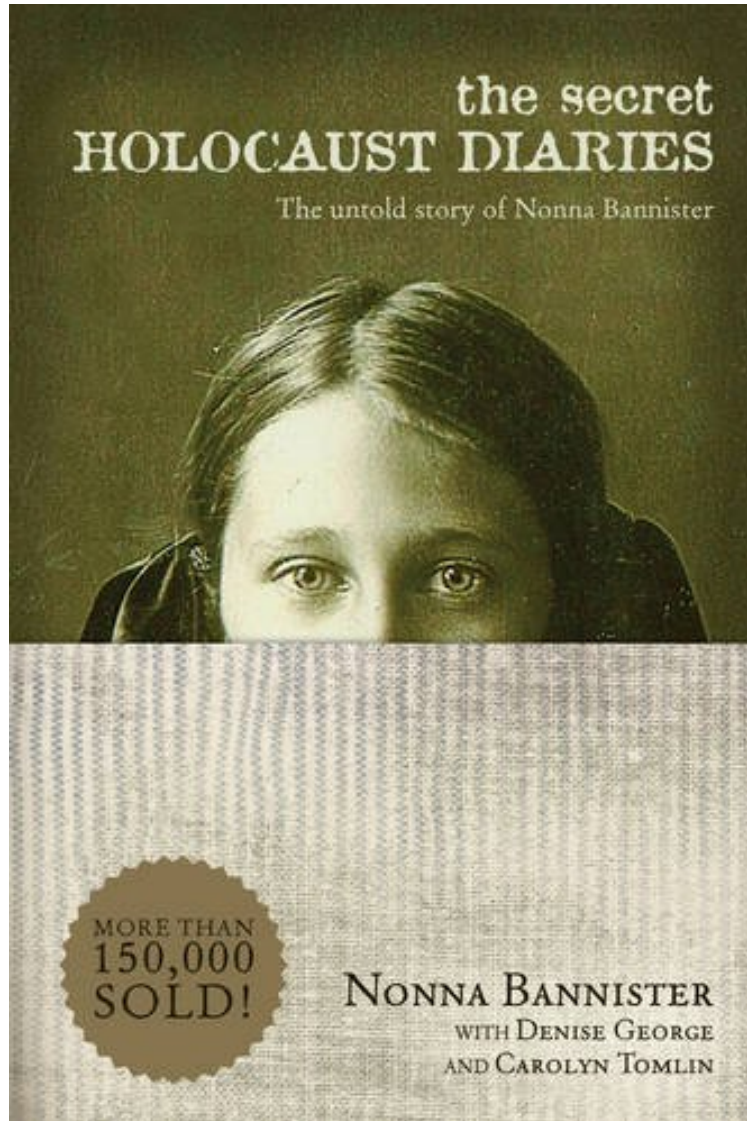


## The Secret Holocaust Diaries: The Untold Story of Nonna Bannister

*From Nonna Bannister*

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**From Nonna Bannister : The Secret Holocaust Diaries: The Untold Story of Nonna Bannister** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Secret Holocaust Diaries: The Untold Story of Nonna Bannister:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I didn't love this book but I didn't dislike it By Lynda A. Dietz I didn't love this book but I didn't dislike it. The title, as many have mentioned, is misleading, since it brings to mind The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom or Anne Frank's famous diary. The book is nothing like either of these. Much of this is Nonna's childhood recollections of family times (a wealthy family) and some of it is . . . I can't explain it, really,

but it's hard to relate to some of it as the writings of a young girl when so much adult memory is inserted and adjusted throughout. The whole thing has the feel of a lack of continuity because of it, like I don't know if I'm listening to Nonna the adult looking back or Nonna the child in the then-present. The book lost a star because of the annoying insertion of notes by the editors; most of them simply repeated information that was already clear, with nothing new added. It lost another by simply being lackluster. The ending was not really a "wow, what a story" so much as it was "oh, it's done?" I got as much out of the appendices as most of the narrative. I think this woman had a powerful story to tell . . . unfortunately, those who told it for her didn't do a very good job of it. I wouldn't go so far as to recommend staying away from it, but it may not hold your attention, either. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Is there a version without editors? By J. Cox This book is basically Nonna's transcription of her diaries from her childhood, mixed in with later memories' and cleaned up by her husband and a couple of editors. I am not sure whether the format is exactly the same in print, but in the Kindle version of the book, I found the editors' interjections in the story to be extremely disruptive and obnoxious, like that one guy at the office who always has to throw in his two cents because he believes he knows more about every subject than anyone else in the room. For example, Nonna talked about her mother painting pictures for a guard and then a few sentences later mentioned Mr. Xxxxx (she actually used a name which I am not remembering at the moment) and how when his paintings were done, something happened. There's a big dividing line and red text calling out "Mr. Xxxxx:" and the editors go on to explain here that when she mentions Mr. Xxxxx, she is probably talking about the guard. Umm, yeah. I guessed as much. And other times when Nonna switched from present tense to past tense, they called out in bright red text the fact that this part here is probably something she wrote later when transcribing the diaries later in life. And when Nonna mentioned something that the Nazis did, the editors interjected to claim the Nazis didn't do that thing. Maybe they didn't in general but how do you know they didn't in this case? GAH! Just stop interrupting!!! Several times the editors' interruptions explained how Nonna had photos of this person or that place, and they exist today. If that is the case, why weren't any of these photos included in the book? Why is every chapter divided by the same photo of... presumably pillow ticking? That being said, if you can forgive the obnoxious editors and just pay attention to Nonna's story, she had some lovely memories of her childhood and her family. And then she survived the horrors of the holocaust. Basically, the explanation at the front of the book telling me that Nonna wrote her diaries on little scraps of paper throughout her childhood, and then years later translated and added to them made me understand that the writing was from two different times in her life. I did not need to then be reminded of it every time things jumped around. And if the editors' other notes were in the form of tiny footnotes or something, it would have let me have more info if I wanted or needed it without so jarringly disrupting the story. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Amazing History By Davandi I chose this book because I love true history! I felt like I was with Nonna throughout this entire book! At times she brought me back to my own childhood in New England! When we visited with my own mothers farm after a good snowfall! My uncles would hitch some horses to the family sleigh, we would all bundle up get big blankets ride all around the little town fields of Dracut, Mass! I used to love those nights, with my Mom's family! Nonna brought me right back to my favorite childhood memories!

Nonna Bannister carried a secret almost to her Tennessee grave: the diaries she had kept as a young girl experiencing the horrors of the Holocaust. This book reveals that story. Nonna's childhood writings, revisited in her late adulthood, tell the remarkable tale of how a Russian girl from a family that had known wealth and privilege, then exposed to German labor camps, learned the value of human life and the importance of forgiveness. This story of loss, of love, and of forgiveness is one you will not forget.

From Publishers Weekly Russian refugee Bannister (1927-2004) rarely spoke about her brutal experiences under the regimes of Stalin and Hitler, not even to the American she married after the war. In this memoir, she reveals how a privileged childhood in the 1920s and '30s gave way to horror and loss in the 1940s. Although the sound quality of this production is poor (lots of rustling papers), Rebecca Gallagher does reasonably well with the multiple languages and wisely avoids attempting to replicate European accents. What is irritating, however, is the constant interruption in the form of unnecessary editor's notes, which make the narrative choppy and disjointed. More helpful is the seventh disc, which contains an interview with Bannister's husband and son, a precious audio reminiscence from Nonna herself, recorded in 1993, and abundant PDF materials, including maps, photographs and genealogical data. A Tyndale hardcover. (June) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist How this story came to be written is a big part of the drama. The only World War II survivor of her wealthy Russian, devout Christian family, Nonna Lisowskaya came to the U.S. in 1950, married Henry Bannister, and never spoke about her Holocaust experience until a few years before her death in 2004, when she revealed her diaries, originally written in six languages on paper scraps that she had kept in a pillow strapped to her body throughout the war. Now those diaries, in her English translation, tell her story of fleeing Stalinist Russia, not knowing what was waiting in Hitler's Germany, where she saw her mother murdered in the camps, escaped a massacre of Jews shot into a pit, was nursed by Catholic nuns, and much more. The editors' commentary in different type constantly interrupts the

memoir, but the notes are helpful in explaining history and context. The added-on heavy messages celebrating Nonnas Christian forgiveness seem intrusive and unnecessary, no matter how heartfelt. --Hazel Rochman This book screams out "Less we forget". In an age when the President of Iran and neo Nazi skin heads attempt to convince all that the Holocaust never happened, and in an era that increasingly breeds secularist "feel good" philosophies, we need to be continually reminded of the presence of pure evil in the world. Yet this is a book with a very distinct difference. Nonna Bannister recounts her personal travails in the first person singular, in a real time account, with touching simplicity and directness - yet with brutal honesty. Bannister rejects any temptation to embroider or hype the raw brutality, tragedies and stark deprivations that were experienced and endured by her family and herself. Bannister remembers the young Nonna as a victim who refuses to be a victim. This absence of any semblance of self pity is made more ringing by her evident joy in recounting through her diaries her fond early memories of family life, and by her faithfulness, when confronted with unspeakable horrors, in practicing a philosophy for life learned at her father's knee - "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Perhaps it is the influence of these twin philosophies - joy and forgiveness - that make this such a special and unique book. Nonna and her family were subjected to many of the worst excesses of the Bolsheviks under Stalinism, were caught in the vice of war between Russia and Germany, and "escaped" into the hell of Nazism. This book gives first person account of the travails of that passage and does so in that manner that shows the reader the real face of true humility. This is a book for the ages. --Dr. Edward J. Coyne, Sr., Samford University Nonna Bannister's entire life was shaped by her secret past and her will to survive. The intense desire to shield her family from her tragic life was Nonna's motivation for years of silence. Her life is a story of love, sacrifice and forgiveness. The Secret Holocaust Diaries is an eye witness account of life in a Nazi Prison camp. This diary presents a unique historical and cultural insite into Russian life before and after the Holocaust. --Neta B. McKnight, R.T., FASRT, Professor Radiography (retired), Jackson State Community College, Jackson, TN