

## **Wilhelminasingel 88**

### **Esther Kozenicki**

#### **“New Address Unknown”**

All that is known about Esther Kozenicki can be accredited to her childhood friend Catrien Hein-Hardenberg, with whom Esther went to school until the Nazi's forbid Jewish students to follow classes with non-Jewish students in 1942.



Though both her parents, Joseph Kozenicki and Neche Kozenicki-Fessel, originate from Poland, Esther Kozenicki is born in Düsseldorf. Already in her early childhood, the Nazi regime comes to power and the family flees to Maastricht and settles at the Wilheminsingel 88 in Maastricht. In Maastricht, Esther joins Catrien's classes at the public secondary school at the Helmstraat and soon, they become friends. Catrien gets to know the Kozenicki family and remembers them as a devout Jewish family.

On August 25, 1942, the Kozenicki family is part of the first group of Jews that is obliged to report themselves. All are deported, except mother Neche, who misses this first call as she has been hospitalized. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, 1942, however, she is sent to Westerbork nonetheless.

## **"I will never return"**

On the evening of August 25, Joseph, Esther and Felix report at the school at the Professor Pieter Willemsstraat. Catrien has spent the day with Esther and joins her to the gathering point at the school. By then, Esther already knows then that she will not return. They are deported to Westerbork. Though Joseph is a textile salesman, he works as an electrician in Westerbork. On the designated 'writing day', Esther writes Catrien from Westerbork – letters which Catrien's mother burns right after Catrien has read them. Catrien only manages to keep two of Esther's letters.

Over the mail, Esther reveals that her life in Westerbork has a great impact on her. "I have gotten completely different ideas here.. You would be surprised to hear my thoughts on things these days," she writes on July 16, 1943. Unfortunately, Catrien will never know how Esther's thoughts have changed. Quickly after the last letter, Catrien receives a change of address: 'New address unknown'. Where Esther has moved, she can only guess.

The Kozenicki family is placed on the 72th and last transport from transition camp Westerbork to extermination camp Sobibor. On July 23, 1943, the entire family is murdered – most likely immediately after they arrive.