Within the Wall

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Fictional Diary
Junior Division
Word Count: 1,949
The tragedy of The Berlin Wall separated families and tore the city apart. The German Democratic Republic (Communist East Berlin) put up the wall to stop their citizens to cross to the Democratic West Berlin. Communist East Berliners still crossed the wall hoping to be allowed to live freely, some made it over, but others died trying to cross. In 1989 the city of Berlin triumphed because the wall came down, when the wall came down Berlin reunited and inspired Germany to come together as one. The wall came down because the President of the GDR was pressured by many people to let it down.

These diary entries were found after the wall came down in East Berlin. They were kept in a box by Susanne the author’s cousin. The author is a girl who was 18 at the time the wall went up. Her name was Sara and she was trapped in East Berlin after visiting her cousin. She experienced the Berlin Wall firsthand and all its tragedies with it. Her story needs to be shared so others can understand what it's like to live without knowing what's going to happen next because they’re from a different place, so this world doesn’t make the mistake of doing it again.

**May 1961**

Today Mother and I went to visit our family in East Berlin. We had to watch what we said about the government in case they took offense. We walked through the checkpoint without any trouble, but the hard part was getting back in. It seemed we stood there for 20 minutes while they checked our passports but going out only took 2-3 minutes. My cousin Susanne and I talked about everything that had changed since I last saw her, she had gotten engaged and asked me to be at her wedding in early August. I agreed but said I needed to be back after a while for my sisters’ birthday. We talked for hours and stayed the night before we had to go back to West Berlin. I wish Susanne had the same freedoms and liberties that I have over here.

**June 1961**

Lots of people are crossing the border to come live in West Berlin instead of East Berlin. Just this month nearly 19,200 people crossed the border. Us West Berliners welcome them with open arms, relieved that they made it over to freedom. Some new East Berliners have started working with me at the childcare center. Walter Ulbricht who is the leader of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) said no one has the intention of building a wall. Why would they want to build a wall? Next month I am planning to go visit Susanne in East Berlin. I’ll ask her opinion on Walter Ulbricht and building a wall. Why does he think he has the right to build a wall (if he’s going to) when it’s not just his country? Other people live in it too and should get an opinion on building a wall.

**August 1961**

I went to Susanne’s wedding early this month and stayed a few extra weeks. My sister’s birthday is August 15th, so I wanted to go back early on the 13th to give her an early birthday present. Walter Ulbricht decided to build the wall during the night, I know for certain it was not there the night before. It wasn’t really a wall more of a barbed wire fence. Nobody can get through, I can’t go back. The British soldiers didn’t stop the wall from going up even though they saw it the next morning. We aren’t getting any help from any other country either. I have tried to reason with the government to let me over the wall since I am from West Berlin, but they won’t make an exception. People are already trying to cross the wall, some have died. The guards have orders to shoot to kill. I went back to Susanne’s and asked if she would take me in,
I told her I would help pay for my cost once I found a job. Every day after my work is done, I go to the wall in hopes that I will see my sister. I’ve only seen her once and we had a rushed conversation before she had to go back. I might be able to cross the wall while it is in the early stages of being built. As if the East German government knew that I was thinking about crossing they started having me followed.

**January 1963**

At the beginning of the year the count of East German guards that had defected reached 1,000. In 1962 about 5,000 people crossed the wall without dying. They thought that if the border guards could make it over without anyone seeing then the regular people could too, they were right. Maybe I could go cross the wall and go home. The wall is fully built by now it is 96 miles, built in four-foot sections each 12 feet tall. Later another section was placed 100 feet back, which is called the death strip. The government sends people who had chosen to work or study over in West Berlin were sent to work in factories, and if you were even thinking that the government should be doing something different, there spies knew and sent you to jail. Everyone wants to go over the wall but so many escapes have failed that we are scared to try. I wonder what my little sister is doing now, if she’s okay.

**July 1969**

The U.S. is having a civil rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The government is actually listening to his suggestions and ideas. That’s just mind blowing, the government doesn’t listen to anyone, it’s a dictatorship. A democracy would be nice though, the people I’ve talked to about this wish we could have something like that over here, something that would allow us to have freedom over here in East Berlin and East Germany. A few years ago, many people dug under the wall and escaped, I’ve tried to dig a tunnel, but the guards found it and the tunnel collapsed. By now I have stopped trying to escape in case I put Susanne and her family in danger. I’ve entirely given up hope of ever seeing my family again.

**April 1972**

Today is my 29th birthday, my family is not here to celebrate with me. The wall has not only separated the city of Berlin but also the country of Germany. The only way to fix the division is to take down the Berlin wall and open the border. Susanne has just given birth to her third child, a boy. I stay home and take care of all three of them while their parents work to support the family. By now the wall is a permanent fixture of Berlin. Not as many people cross the wall every year now, it’s like they’ve given up hope and learned to accept their fate of being stuck here. Then there are the rare few who like it in East Berlin, without all the freedoms and liberties.

**October 1980**

Susanne and I walked the wall today hoping we would get the chance to see my family. The buildings close to the wall are vacant and the windows have been boarded up, so no one jumps out and over the wall. The border guards were vigilant and didn’t allow us to get close to the wall. By now the wall is covered in graffiti protesting this division of our city. We went to church afterward and saw a man who protested the government’s decisions taken away and thrown in jail. News from the U.S. came this month, they are thriving and seem to have forgotten about us over here. Jimmy Carter is the president over there and has done nothing to help us.

**June 1987**
Word eventually got over here that the president of the U.S. had spoken. The President of the United States spoke on the 12th this month in West Berlin. His name was Ronald Reagan, he was talking about tearing down the wall. He dared Mr. Gorbachev to tear down the wall. The GDR didn’t like that and tried to keep the information quiet as long as possible. Not that the wall will ever come down anyway, it’s permanent. Why is the U.S. helping us now when they didn’t before? Maybe they think they can get something out of it, if the wall comes down from their efforts then we have to help them. Right? JFK helped a little bit in 1961 because he was more involved, and the wall went up then, so he felt beholden to help. I was on my way to work a few weeks ago when I saw several make it over the wall by jumping. I also watched a man fail to jump over the wall from a street near the wall, the windows had all been boarded up on this building because they were afraid of that happening, so he jumped from the roof and made a giant splat. That makes me think when I decide to make my escape that I won’t survive.

**November 7, 1989**

Today I have decided to cross the wall and see my family. It has been 28 years since I have seen them, and I have lived with Susanne and her family that long. I have been collecting supplies for my dangerous journey. I have been preparing for several months, I have food and water aplenty and guard schedules memorized, and a knife in case I get attacked. I hope everything goes according to plan. I plan to climb over the wall while the guards are changing shifts then run the death strip. There is a risk to this, I might die but it is definitely worth the risk if I can see my family again.

So, thank you Susanne for letting me stay with you during these horrible times. I feel like you are my sister not my cousin. It is not your fault that I was trapped here, I made a conscious decision to visit you when I knew there was talk of a wall. It is the government’s fault for thinking that we need a wall. Next time you see me I will be with my family and the wall will be down. I will come visit you first when it finally falls and thank you for all you have done for me. If I die and the wall falls, please let my family know that I was trying to go back to them. I wish we had more time together, but it is time for me to go back to my family. Please give my love to your little ones and tell them that their Aunt Sara will see them soon.

~ With love your sister Sara

Sara made it over the beginning of the wall while the guards were distracted by the shift change, but she was shot while crossing the death strip. The guard who shot her was deeply regretful and couldn’t deal with the guilt of killing someone, so he took his own life. The wall came down on November 9, 1989 12 days after Sara died crossing the death strip. The East Berliners stormed the wall after the GDR made an announcement that they could cross if they had the proper clearance. The border guards were overwhelmed, and East Berliners stormed through. They celebrated and danced the night away. Berlin became one city once again with its people united and 11 months later Germany became one country once again.

**Annotated Bibliography**

**Primary Sources**

This source talked about what happened after the East Berliners were given permission to cross the wall and how the wall came to be closed. The article showed how the Berliners reacted to the news.


This source interviewed people who lived in Berlin during the Berlin Wall. Their life in East and West Berlin were shared also their opinions on the Berlin Wall were voiced.


This was a newspaper printed November 10, 1989 the day after the wall fell. One of the article entries in the newspaper provided information on what the border guards thought about the wall falling.


From this source the information I received talked about how the East Berliners managed to break through the wall on November 9, 1989. It also talked about how the government reacted to their citizens going through the wall unchecked.


This video talked about how the citizens of East Berlin made it over the Berlin Wall. It explained how some people dug tunnels and made it over in great detail.

*Man Tearing down the Berlin Wall.*

This photograph showed a man determined to break through the wall. I used this source in showing through my writing how some people were determined to make it over the wall and live a free life.

Photograph of President Reagan giving a speech at the Berlin Wall, Brandenburg Gate, Federal Republic of Germany; 6/12/1987; Collection RR-WHPO: White House Photographic Collection.

This photograph showed how much the president of the U.S. was willing to go to make sure the people were free. I included my observations about the photo in my paper because it was an important piece of history because the people of Berlin realized someone was willing to help them.


This speech emphasized how far President Reagan wanted to help the Berliners to gain their freedom. He dared Mr. Gorbachev to tear down the wall. His speech helped because almost 2 years later the wall “fell”.

**Secondary Sources**


This source provided information on how they government decided to create the wall and how the efforts of others brought it down. It also talked about what happened after the wall fell.

This website talked about the overall history of the Berlin Wall and how the people reacted to the atrocity. It also talked about the consequences of World War II and how they effected Germany as a whole country.


The article on this website talked about how many East German citizens crossed the border before the wall went up and how the East German government came up with the idea for a wall on the border line.


This source focused mainly on what happened after the East German government said that anyone was free to go through the border with proper permission. It also showed the wild parties that followed.


This source focused on what the wall did to the citizens of Berlin and how they worked through the tragedy. The main focus of the website was what happened to Germany after World War II.


This book was my most valuable source because it went very in depth about what happened during the time period and what happened before the wall went up.


This source was mostly emphasizing on how many citizens of Berlin escaped before the wall went up and what was going on in the U.S. at this time.

“What Was the Berlin Wall and How Did It Fall?” *Imperial War Museums*, 2018, www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-was-the-berlin-wall-and-how-did-it-fall.

What happened before the wall and how Berlin came to be divided was this websites main focus. It also talked about Walter Ulbricht and what he was planning during this time.
I chose the Berlin Wall as my topic because it affected thousands of people’s lives. The Berlin Wall divided an entire city and I thought that was worth learning about. Learning about why the German government decided to put the wall up. I wanted to know why so many people risking their lives to cross the wall. To know why some American presidents got involved. I wanted to have a topic related to World War II because I know people that served during the war. The Berlin Wall didn’t happen during World War II but was a consequence of the war. The Berlin Wall was something I wanted to learn about, so it was the perfect topic to research.

I found newspapers from the days after the wall went up and came down, which helped me see their point of view. Once I had found the sources, I needed I started paraphrasing them, I looked through the source and found interesting information then put it into my own words. My nonfiction book was the most helpful source because it went in depth much more than the other sources. The hardest part was figuring out which category to put my paraphrases in because many of the paraphrases applied to multiple categories. It all depended on whose point of view you looked at it from.

Once I decided to create a fictional diary to explain my topic, I brainstormed for ideas of how to present the information. I created a character that would allow both sides of the wall to be showcased and explain their story of what happened. I included facts about what actually happened and tried to present the information the way I thought someone in the situation would talk about it. The hardest part of writing a fictional diary was blending the facts and the fiction parts so it sounded like the character was writing naturally. Then I decided on the best scenario to end the story and wrap it up.

The Berlin Wall was a tragedy because it separated families, took away people's freedom, and destroyed many people's careers and dream. Some West Berliners were forced to
stay on the east side of the wall after being in East Berlin and not making it back before August 13th. Others were punished just for taking full advantage of the freedom in West Berlin. The Berlin Wall was a triumph only after it came down on November 9, 1989. The citizens of Berlin celebrated once the wall came down, and the city was once again united and showed both sides of Germany how to put aside their differences and be one country again.