



"The best adventures grow out of a little curiosity."

—*USA Today*

★ "A stirring, uplifting, and elegantly packaged saga."

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"If you love the Curious George books, you'll treasure *The Journey That Saved Curious George*."

—*Charlotte Observer*



*Curious George* is known and loved all over the world. But few people know the exciting history of his creators. In 1940, Hans and Margret Rey had to flee their Paris home as the German army advanced on the capital city. They began their harrowing journey on bicycles with their children's book manuscripts among their few possessions.

Louise Borden combed primary resources, including Hans Rey's pocket diaries, to tell this dramatic true story. Archival materials introduce readers to the world of Hans and Margret Rey while Allan Drummond dramatically illustrates their war-time trek to a new home.

*Allan Drummond* has written and illustrated several books for children. His website is [www.allandrummond.com](http://www.allandrummond.com).

*Louise Borden* researched this story by visiting many of the places where Hans and Margret Rey spent time, including Château Feuga in France. Her website is [www.louiseborden.com](http://www.louiseborden.com).

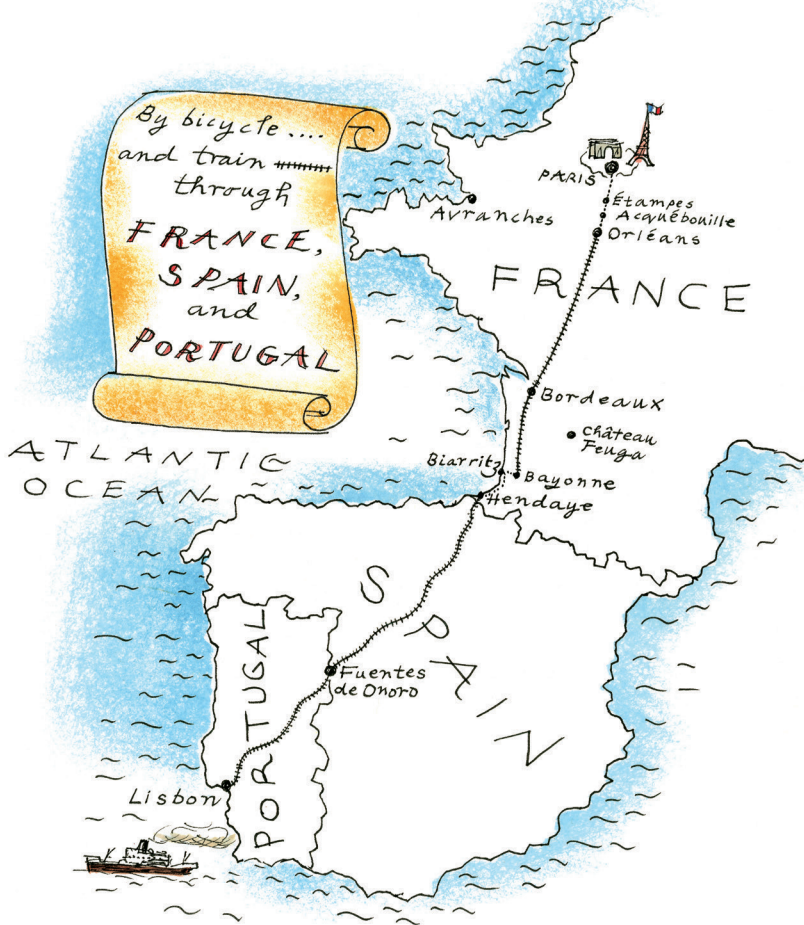
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## FINDING THE STORY

For many years, I was intrigued by the story of Margret and H. A. Rey's flight from Paris on bicycles in June 1940. Others in the children's book field had mentioned this escape from the Nazi invasion, but no one seemed to know the details of those harrowing days. The story felt incomplete. I wanted to know more. I wanted real images. I was curious, just like the Reys' famous little monkey, George.

And so I began my own journey, a journey of research. Rich sources for my research were Margret and Hans Rey's

personal papers, donated by their estate to the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi. This nationally known library houses the papers and original artwork of more than 1,200 children's book authors and illustrators.

But after sifting through hundreds of the Reys' letters, notebook pages, and photographs, and even after walking through Paris on various research trips, I still had questions without answers. How many kilometers did the Reys travel on those two bicycles? Which roads did they follow on their journey south? What happened to the belongings that they had to leave behind? What wartime dangers did they face?

Over several years I had conversations in person or by phone with people who had known the Reys. I wrote letters and e-mailed people in Germany, England, Portugal, and France. And I traveled to some of the towns, cities, and addresses gleaned from the letters and work diaries that the Reys wrote during 1936–40, the years that they lived in Paris. Each step of the way, I tried to focus on Margret and Hans before *Curious George* was published and brought them fame.

Dates, postmarks, travel papers, and expense records provided invaluable clues in French, English, German, and Portuguese. Newspaper interviews from the 1940s and 1950s gave me needed details. Slowly, piece by piece, I began to stitch together the fabric of their story.

*The Journey That Saved Curious George* is my way, as a writer, of becoming a witness to part of Hans and Margret Rey's story. It is my way of honoring their creativity and their courage during a dark time in history for many countries of Europe.

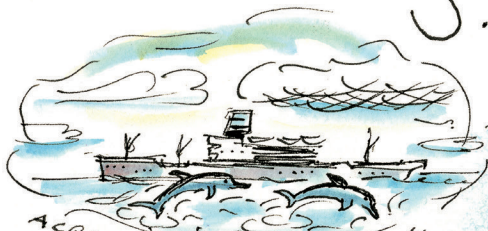
*Louise Borden*



LISBON: GOING ABOARD

U.S.A.

New York



ACROSS THE ATLANTIC



WAITING IN RIO DE JANEIRO

SOUTH  
AMERICA

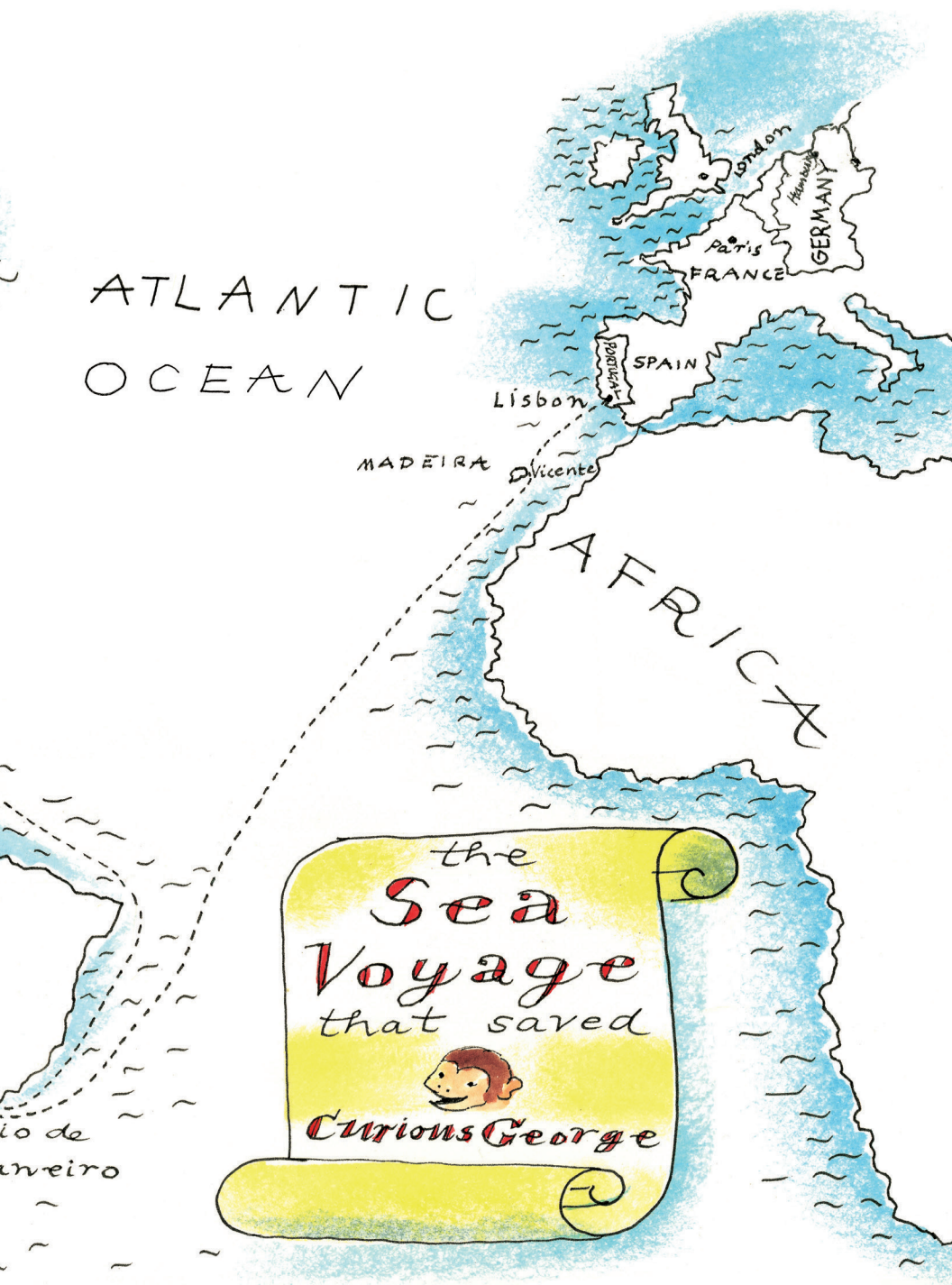
Amazon River

BRAZIL



NEW YORK: CURIOUS GEORGE IS PUBLISHED

# ATLANTIC OCEAN







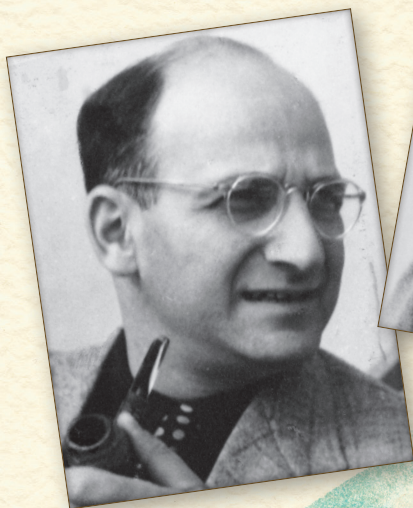
Above: H. A. and Margret Rey at a book signing, ca. 1945

Opposite, left: H. A. Rey, born September 16, 1898

Opposite, right: Margret Rey, born May 16, 1906

— PART 1 —

# TWO ARTISTS





# 1906 CHILDHOODS IN GERMANY

In 1906, Hans Augusto Reyersbach was a boy growing up in Hamburg, Germany, a port city with canals and a thousand bridges . . . and the River Elbe, which ran to the North Sea.

At the age of eight, Hans spent many hours in the cold breeze near Hamburg's docks, watching foreign ships and barges move along the Elbe. For the rest of his life, Hans would love boats and rivers and the sea.



Above:  
*Scenes of Hamburg at the beginning of the twentieth century*

Often Hans visited the Hagenbeck Zoo with his brother and two sisters. *Monkeys and lions!*

*Polar bears and seals!* The world of animals from faraway places was just a few streets from the Reyersbach home.



It was at this wonderful zoo that Hans learned to imitate the sounds of animals. He could roar like a fierce lion. He could bark like a seal. Another favorite place for young Hans was the circus. All those horses and bright colors! *What a show!*

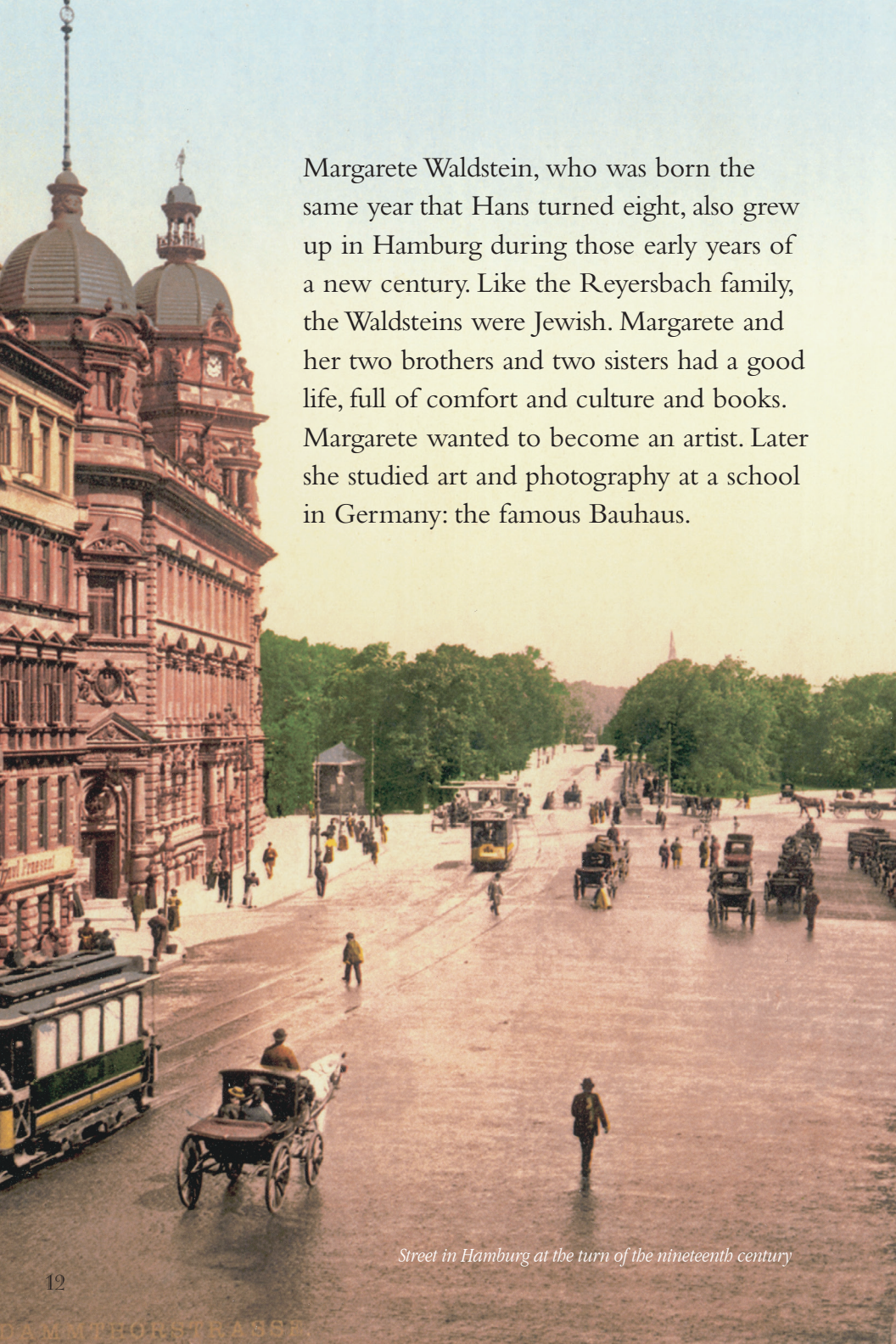
Hans loved to draw pictures and paint. And he was good at it. Hans made a painting of horses in the park, near one of Hamburg's beautiful lakes. Later, in school, Hans studied Latin and Greek, French and English. He knew five languages, including German.



Top right: *Illustration by H. A. Rey in Whiteblack the Penguin, 2000*

Bottom right:  
*Painting by Hans Reyersbach, 1906*





Margarete Waldstein, who was born the same year that Hans turned eight, also grew up in Hamburg during those early years of a new century. Like the Reyersbach family, the Waldsteins were Jewish. Margarete and her two brothers and two sisters had a good life, full of comfort and culture and books. Margarete wanted to become an artist. Later she studied art and photography at a school in Germany: the famous Bauhaus.

*Street in Hamburg at the turn of the nineteenth century*



Top left: *Margarete Waldstein as a young girl*

Top right: *Margarete Waldstein as a toddler*

Bottom: *Margret's certificate of completion for Klosterschule. Official documents show different spellings of her first name.*







The next years were full of change and adventure for Hans Reyersbach. During World War I, he was a soldier in Kaiser Wilhelm's German army. Hans didn't like war, and he didn't like being a soldier. And he was still drawing pictures. Hans loved to laugh, so sometimes his sketches were quite funny.

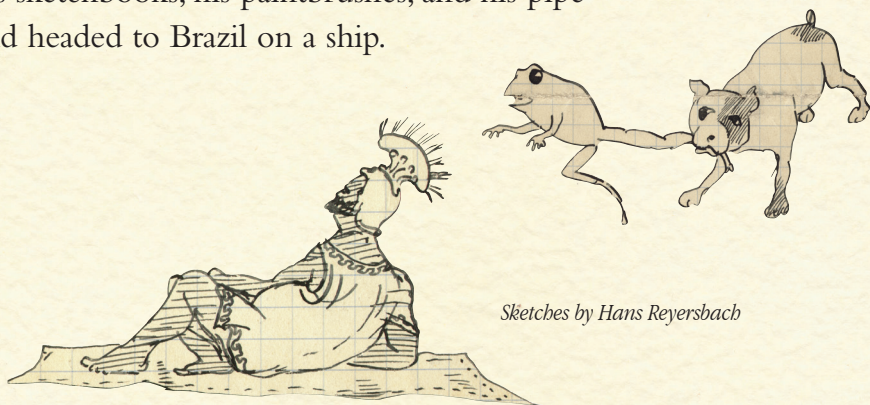
On clear nights, he studied the stars and the constellations. Hans was a deep thinker as well as an artist. Always, he was *curious* about the world. Because of his months on the eastern front, Hans could now speak a smattering of Russian.

*Hans Reyersbach as a young German soldier*



When Germany lost the war, twenty-year-old Hans Reyersbach went home to Hamburg and found work making posters for the local circus. But times were very hard in his city, and there was little money.

After a few years as a university student, Hans packed his sketchbooks, his paintbrushes, and his pipe and headed to Brazil on a ship.



*Sketches by Hans Reyersbach*

