

***Lisa of Willesden Lane* – “And remember that I love you”**

Student Handout 2 Biography

Alice Boddy was born on September 6, 1921, in Vienna, Austria. Alice remembers having a full and happy life in Vienna until March 1938, when the German army invaded and occupied the country. By this time, Alice was in high school. After she heard about the a plan to take 10,000 children to safety in England, Alice registered herself for the Kindertransport (Children’s Transport).

In April 1939, she was notified that she had a spot on the Kindertransport. Alice said she always believed in herself and at a very young age learned to rely on herself maintaining a firm belief that she could always make it.

Alice was later able to reunite with her mother and older brother in Chicago, Illinois. She later moved to California, married, raised two set of twins, and later had two grandchildren. The interview was conducted on August 22, 1990, in San Rafael, California.



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Historical Background

The Kindertransport

On November 9-10, 1938, Jewish homes, shops, and houses of worship were destroyed during Kristallnacht (Kri-stuhl-naakt – The Night of Broken Glass). Following Kristallnacht, the British government agreed to help transport children under the age of 17 to Great Britain to keep them safe until the danger had passed. The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) issued a plea to British citizens to open their homes to the child refugees. Volunteers went to Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe to organize transports, in an undertaking that became known as the Kindertransport (Children’s Transport).

The first Kindertransport left Berlin, Germany on December 1, 1938, and arrived in Harwich, Great Britain on December 2, 1938. Most children travelled by train to ports in Belgium and the Netherlands, where they boarded a ship for Great Britain. Once the children arrived in Great Britain, they were sent to live with foster families. If no family had been found for them, the children were sent to hostels, boarding schools or farms. Between 9,000 and 10,000 children were saved, including 7,500 Jewish children. Most of the children were treated well in their new homes, but some were not.

When the children left their homes, they believed the separation from their family members would be temporary and that they would eventually return home to be reunited with their families. However, most family members left behind in Nazi-occupied Europe were killed during the Holocaust.

The Holocaust

In January 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed as Chancellor of Germany. Hitler was the leader of the Nazi party; the Nazi government was in office from 1933-1945. Within months, the Nazis began making laws that targeted people they did not believe were “pure” Germans. Many of these laws impacted Jewish citizens of Germany as well as other countries the Nazis conquered. In many cases, families were taken from their homes and separated from one another and imprisoned. Many were killed. This escalated process of Nazi conquest, which continued through 1945, is known as the Holocaust. The Holocaust ended in 1945, when Germany was defeated in World War II.