

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSTIY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Nazi Germany Project

Experiences in Nazi Germany

O.H. 174

KAY WUNDER KOLLMAYER

Interviewed

by

Steven R. Ard

on

May 31, 1980

KAY WUNDER KOLLMAYER

Kay Wunder Kollmayer of Hubbard, Ohio, was born in Bayreuth, Bavarian Germany on December 14, 1921, to Kilian and Takobine Wunder. Her family moved to Nürnberg when she was six. After grade school, she trained first to be a florist and then secretary. Still not satisfied, she went back to school and became a dental hygienist in 1938.

Mrs. Kollmayer experienced German life during the rise and fall of Adolph Hitler. She was a Hitler Youth. She served in the Youth Work Force. She was active on the home-front during the war.

After the war, she married Ernst Kollmayer on August 18, 1951. Later, she convinced him to emigrate to the United States. Today her interests are chess, sports and books.

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INTERVIEWEE: KAY WUNDER KOLLMAYER

INTERVIEWER: Steven R. Ard

SUBJECT: Hitler Youth; Hitler; life in Nürnberg; work force where she was sent to Riga--escape from the Russians

Date: May 31, 1980

R: This is an interview with Käthe Kollmayer for the Youngstown State University pre World War II Germany project by Steven R. Ard at 390 Elizabeth Street, Hubbard, Ohio on May 31, 1980 at approximately 9:15 a.m.

K: Well, I was born in Bayreuth, this is in Bavaria and Bayreuth is the city of Richard Wagner. My father was a Master Sergeant in the German Army, later he became police and later he switched to streetcar conductor and he made it up to streetcar controller in Nürnberg. We moved from Bayreuth to Nürnberg. Bayreuth is a small town, middle class. Nürnberg is half-a-million people, a very old and beautiful city. Nürnberg is the city where Hitler had all his rallies and conventions.

A: Want to tell me what year this was when you arrived in Nürnberg?

K: I arrived in Nürnberg when I was six years old and it was 1927 and I started school there and Nürnberg school was much tougher than in Bayreuth. They had much more subjects and started right off. So, I went to public school for eight years there and from there on, three years training for a florist. I learned to be a florist, got my degree and went in the evenings to night school and learned secretary work, bookkeeping, shorthand, three books of typing; and quit this job and went on to dental school as a dental assistant. And the doctor who was the president of the dental association sent me to school for

dental hygienist and I was to go on to be a dentist, but in 1945 they threw every German out of the universities and put the foreigners in. Qualified or not, they were in for about three years till they realized they cannot put people in who are not qualified for universities, but by this time we were just discouraged. I didn't want to go back anymore and this was also on a scholarship from the country. We had to make a big tough test and from each city was only one picked for this university.

A: What did they tell you when they asked you to leave? What did they tell you was the reason?

K: The reason was we were in the Hitler Jugend. Do you know what a Hitler Jugend is? It was a Hitler Youth. Everybody, by the time you were ten years old, you were required to join the Hitler Jugend; and it was a great honor to be in there. Most young people were anxious to get in and a few who rebelled, they just were drafted in.

When I was three years in the Hitler Jugend--I was about fifteen then--they made me a leader of two hundred girls. They were sort of juvenile delinquents. Those girls were sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen years old and I had to train them to become decent citizens. Of course, they didn't know my age otherwise they would never obey me.

A: How did you train them?

K: Well, to begin with, we did a lot of sports; then we read books, political science, handicraft, trips, dance, singing. I had to make them like me first otherwise they would have given me a very hard time, but it didn't take too long and I had them won over on my side. The Hitler Jugend for girls, we were trained to be good mothers, learn a little bit about everything, history, geography, a lot of books and we took trips. Each time we learned anything about history, we tried to go to those places and see what it's all about to make us better understand. The Frankisch Switzerland Province, we travelled to Hamberg, Germany five hundred miles away from Nürnberg; and we always got special prices by the train.

The train is owned by the government, so they give us the trains very inexpensive when we travelled someplace; and the hotels and castles we stayed in was just about free. The citizens paid for this. Young people, you didn't have much money.

A: You said that you had the girls read some books. Do you remember the names of any of the books that you were required to read?

- K: Those were German books and I don't think you would even know them; all kinds of books, mostly history with a story told from way back from the kings. And the history in the schools started from the stone age and all the way up to the Hitler Regime.
- A: Who gave you the books?
- K: Oh, we got them from the schools, universities, libraries. They had beautiful libraries; people donated them, lots of good books.
- A: Were any of these books picked out by the Nazi Party?
- K: I don't think they really picked them out, they just did away with the trashy books. They all were burned. There wasn't a trashy book in the country anymore. They tried to make us clean citizens, which they succeeded.
- A: What is a trashy book; what kind of books were?
- K: I think, like if they had too much sex and homosex and all those things, that was taboo, completely. German youth supposed to be very clean, no smoking, drinking--okay, but our way of drinking is different because our beer is much better. It's food. It's not like chemicals; and the wine was very clear. So, drinking was not considered bad, smoking was considered bad.
- A: You said they sang. What kind of songs did you sing?
- K: Oh, beautiful songs. We had beautiful songwriters; and they are still in existence today. They are coming back. Folksongs, patriotic songs of course, I think I know a thousand songs at least, by heart, the words and everything. Germany was always a nation of singing. They used to wander through the forest with a guitar and everybody singing for the picnics. And in the schools, first thing in the morning we started out with a song, the whole class. It would refresh the whole class and we ended up with a song and if there were people singing, they couldn't be bad people. You had to sing.
- A: Can you just give me the names of the songs, even if they're in German, can you give me the German name?
- K: "Das Wandern ist des Müller's Lust" or "Heut Kommen die lurtigen Tage" In English: "Strolling in the Forest" or "Today is a Happy Day." Do you want some more?
- A: Sure.
- K: Be proud of your country. Want me to hum a few. (laughter)

I couldn't name them all. I got too many in my head,

A: Okay, you said that you trained the girls in the Hitler Youth to be good mothers? Now, what did that type of training consist of?

K: Well, to begin with, very much sport to get the idea of having premature sex out of their body. When you are tired you don't think about this. We started, sometimes at six o'clock in the morning, first with one hour swimming, and we took the bicycles, rode about twenty-five miles to Erlangen, which is a university city; took one hour horseback riding, and we took the bicycles back to Nürnberg. We went to the tennis court for two hours then we went fencing and then we had the lunch and after this came the studies; just about every subject you can think of.

It was up to me. I got guidelines what I should teach them, but they also gave me a lot of freedom what books I chose to teach those girls and make it interesting. When you read a book to somebody, ask questions in between, let them answer, ask questions and book review afterwards. History mostly, and geography. We had big maps and we had to learn the whole world just about.

A: Okay, the guidelines, who gave you the guidelines?

K: From higher leader. The leaders, the smallest one had 25 girls, the next one 50, then came 200, and then came the one who was above us again and she had the whole city under her, and then Baldur von Schirach was the leader, who was sitting in jail for about thirty years at least and I really don't think he committed any crimes.

A: Who was this now, that was in jail?

K: Baldur von Schirach. His mother was a U.S. born American citizen and his father was a German. The father married American girl here, took her back to Germany and the boy, of course, was a German citizen when he was born and he was a beautiful young fellow. In his thirties about thirty years old, he was the leader of the whole Hitler Jugend, girls and boys.

And the guidelines came out like every month we got guidelines what subject to teach. Twice a week we had our own hall in a castle someplace where we could meet and then we had lots of sports equipment, just about everything. Hitler Jugend was really not a bad thing.

I compare it with Boy and Girl Scout here,

And we also sent those girls out to families with kids, with lots of kids, who needed help. If the mother has a new baby, she needed a babysitter for those kids, a cook, a cleaner; the girls got out and helped those people for nothing. It was free. All services were free, whatever we were doing, we never got paid for anything.

A: How long were you in the Hitler Youth?

K: Until seventeen years of age.

A: Till seventeen and what year was that?

K: You got in when you were ten years old, that was in 1931 till I was eighteen, that was in 1939; about seventeen, eighteen years old. We could stay on and become higher leaders, but then we got drafted for Arbeits Dienst. Arbeits Dienst is a working force. Every girl, regardless of the status, had to serve one year before they went on to college or whatever they wanted to do with their life, unless they got married, which was discouraged. They did not want very young girls to marry. Before you got married, you had extra schooling how to be a mother and good wife and good cook and a housekeeper.

And during this one year we lived in a camp and we had brown uniforms for going out, similar like your WAC's [Women's Army Corps] girls here, and working clothes also. They were boots and blue jeans, like blue jeans. Then you were sent six months, either on a farm and did farm work in the fields and helped the farmer, cooking and cleaning and whatever or in a household with lots of kids and you had to do anything they told you to. And the second six months you either were sent as a streetcar conductor in a factory. They tried to shift you around to different works.

The idea was, we were short on laborers then, and Hitler got cheap laborers. We got twenty-five cents a day. The factory owner or whoever, had to pay one dollar to the outfit. And we got twenty-five cents of this and we got food and everything free.

And the second idea was to teach every girl not to be arrogant. When you became, later, a doctor, a professional or whatever, that you don't look down on people who clean the street, the sewers or do labor work. They

tried to make us understand if they don't do it, you have to do it all yourself. And it does not matter what you do in life, whatever you do, do it right wherever they put you. So, from there on we respected all kind of professions. We never looked down on somebody lower than we were and that was a very good idea. And all the girls, there was no rank, no nothing. We got along beautiful. And in the evening we went back to camp and we did sports and songs and whatever.

A: In the working force, what did you do?

K: I was sent on a farm and I got up at five o'clock in the morning. We went out and weeded the field and plowed and sowed and whatever had to be done. And in the afternoon I had to help in the kitchen, cooking, cleaning, scrubbing the floors. And in the evening we were tired and the fun began.

A: The brown uniforms that you wore, did you like that uniform?

K: Very much so, they were really sharp.

A: Can you describe what it consisted of?

K: We had skirt, jacket, blouses--the blouses were white--and pullovers and coat, gloves and one of those sharp hats.

A: Did you have to pay for that or did they give you that when you joined?

K: No, they gave us this. Stockings went with it and the shoes went with it too, brown shoes. And we had to keep them in tip-top shape; and if the uniform didn't fit when they gave it to you, you had to make it fit yourself. You just had to sew it till you fit it.

A: Did most of them fit or did most of them need . . . ?

K: Most of them fit. They ask your size, but some of them, they wanted them a little bit shorter, they made them shorter. (laughter)

A: What else can you remember about the working force when you were there? Did you have more than one job? I mean, you said most of the girls were transferred around. Where did you go from the farm?

K: In a factory, but I hated it. I hated this monitor

work; and they took me out of there. I asked for a transfer. So streetcar, that was fun, tickets and all and you saw the city while you were working, so that wasn't bad at all. You got, not a brown uniform then, you got a streetcar uniform. The city furnished this, but in the evening you wore your own uniform again. They didn't even know we were from the working force. We were sent there, the people didn't know. So, for twenty-five cents, it wasn't too bad.

A: What did you do with all this money you made?

K: Well, we bought sometimes a candybar, sometimes a pair of extra silk stockings because theirs weren't too silky and most of it I saved for a present for my mother and father. I never spent much money on myself.

A: Let's talk about your mother and father. How are they doing during the 1930's? Now, this is during the Depression? How is your dad getting along? The early thirties?

K: Well, we were fortunate, during the Depression. This was also inflation right? The money, you got it by the sackful, but he always got paid ahead of time and since he worked for the city, they gave him extra food and we really never suffered too much. But he also helped the neighbors. We shared whatever we had with other people who weren't so fortunate. Our family never suffered during this Depression.

But there was a lot of young people without a job staying around and of course, they got bad ideas when you have nothing to do and it kind of got criminal in Germany, that's really when Hitler came along and took the country out of the slum. And first, whoever heard of Hitler? But he had such a way of talking. He never talked out of note or anything. How do you say this?

A: Out of his head?

K: Out of his head; and it was so powerful you couldn't help listening to him and he did make a lot of sense. Of course, I was a little girl then and didn't care too much about politics, but everybody was listening. "Here comes the man who's promising us jobs, a car for everybody and a house for everybody especially the families with kids." So, the resistant communists and socialists, they were fighting him, but more and more people switched over and after a few years, von Hindenburg, which was our last president, signed us over to

him; and just about 75 percent of the people in Germany thought it was the most beautiful thing ever happened to Germany, was Hitler.

And he kept his promises. In no time the factories were working. There wasn't anybody out of work anymore. And my idea is, he did this by putting all of in the working force, in the Army and he got so many young people off the street there and the rest got jobs. He built this country up. It was unbelievable. He built the Autobahn and in Nürnberg, the Reichsparteitag Gelände for big congress. Where the monies came from, we never thought about this. It occurred to us later that somebody had to finance all this. When there's nothing there, how do you build up? And we understand and learned it was Rotschild from France. He is Jewish and he is one of the richest men in Europe. He financed Hitler, perhaps a lot of other people helped too.

A: Let's go back, during the Depression you said it took sackfuls of money. Can you remember the price of some things? How much you had to pay out?

K: I really can't remember too much about this because I was not handling money too much at this time. I was too young. I didn't earn any money. As a child you couldn't care less where the food comes from, your parents are responsible for this, but the money got worthless, inflation, Depression. But the Depression was also in the United States at the same time wasn't it?

A: Right.

K: It all hangs together. The dollar was the main currency of the Western World; the dollar goes down, the whole Western World goes down with it.

A: You said that Hitler promised you jobs, you spoke about the jobs and he promised you cars, every working man. Did you father have a car?

K: No. You wanted a car, they took like twenty dollars a month out of your paycheck and put it in the bank. This was the Volkswagen he was talking about; and the Volkswagen, at this time, cost about 250 marks something in this order. I don't know exactly anymore, very inexpensive. And a Volkswagen was built to last twenty years without repairs. And they do, unless somebody puts the wrong parts in.

So then he started all the people travelling, the poor ones who never travelled before. He made those trips

very inexpensive and we travelled just about anyplace for ten dollars, by train, by bus, you name it. He tried to broaden the mind of all the people, mix them up because before they raised kids; they couldn't go anyplace. While the parents travelled, the mothers got just about everything free. There was a mother organization and when she felt run-down, they put her on a vacation three to six weeks and sent a babysitter there, which was from the working force. She had to take over the household for the rest of the kids. We thought it was very beautiful, vacation, four weeks, six weeks.

- A: Okay, you also mentioned he promised people housing. What type of housing were they building.
- K: Beautiful homes, brick homes, but Germany has not much space. Germany is a small country, so the houses were built in a row. But a family with kids needs a house--not an apartment--with a garden. And to grow up in the fresh air. On the outskirts of the city he started buildings all over and when a country builds, then it's booming, everybody else has a job because the building industry, they need steel, they need cement, they need all kind of things, plumbers, you name it. And he built wherever he found the room beautiful parks for the kids to play in, sports equipment and the schooling.

He sorted the brains out. The brainy ones were sent free to school. The other ones who didn't have too much, they had to learn something else. We had counselors who took time for each child individually, in school and find out what the particular talent of that child is. Very young, they started very young with this and told the parents, talked them into letting the kid learn a trade because you need a lot of draftsmen, a lot of handymen too, like carpenters, plumbers. It doesn't necessarily mean that they have no brain, but they were not university material. Some of them just didn't like the idea going that long to school. Everybody was put in the right place and do, whatever you do, you do it right and it's still today.

- A: Okay, you mentioned he had opposition from the communists. Now, what kind of people were backing the communists in Germany?
- K: See, communists in the United States is a bad word. You had Socialist Party and Communist Party and those were the two oppositions. And the Socialist Party is

really not a bad party, but Democrat Social Party, this is the middle way between real low poor people and real rich people. They try to make it a little bit more even. He had a lot of people against him. I remember in Nürnberg the Nazis marched through Nürnberg. This was in 1933, before he came to power, shortly before; and Hindenburg was there, von Hindenburg, which was our president. And the Jews were in hotels all looking down and the communists were on the other side and we were there looking at the Nazis marching through. That was something new to us, the whole thing, and here the shooting begun. Our mother put us, laid us on the street, tuck the head in till the shooting stopped over our heads. The communists were shooting at the Nazis. The Nazis had not weapons at this time. They didn't shoot back, but they were shooting at them. But nevertheless, you could not stop them anymore. They were too powerful by then, too many people liked the idea about the promises he made, which he really kept.

A: Did you have family discussions about Hitler?

K: Lots of it. My father, he thought he was a good idea, Hitler. He probably would be very good for the country, and he voted for him. And pretty soon the whole neighborhood--we were a middle class neighborhood--except a few who still resisted, but they had federal jobs. You have a federal job, you either join the Nazi party or you have no federal job anymore. The dictation started right then and there. But we, as kids, didn't realize it was a dictation. We couldn't care less what they dictated. We just followed orders that's all. We were trained to follow orders anyhow. So, we didn't feel we were dictated. I realized this in 1945 that we couldn't pick up books from a foreign country they don't want us to read.

A: Your father, what did he say about the communists or the social democrats?

K: What he said about them?

A: Yes, how did he feel towards them?

K: Well, he was a social democrat first.

A: Oh, he was?

K: Yes, he was not a communist. But my uncle, which was my mother's brother, he was a doctor engineer, he was

a communist leader, a big one, And he explained to us what communism is all about when we were little girls. On the paper it's almost perfect too, but in practice it looks different. Any time you're not allowed to speak your mind, it's dictation; and any time they threw you in jail for speaking your mind, it's bad. But it didn't start out like this. The communists, they wanted to distribute the money a little bit more evenly. So, we had very poor people and very rich people and nothing in between, not too much. So, they tried to cut the rich ones down with their salaries and the poor ones, give them a little bit more. But what the Russians do with their communism is bolshevism I think. That's not, it's just not working and our democracy doesn't work too good either when you look at it.

A: The Weimar Republic, the government in power, how did your family or yourself feel about that?

K: Well, my father was against it, but my mother's brother was a leader there in Weimar. He had to flee when Hitler came to power. He had to flee and my father was of Hitler's party so the safest place was our house. We took him in and when visitors came we put him in the attic. And we were kids and we were strictly told, "Never, ever let it slip out that we have a visitor in the house," because they would have hanged my father and him. We knew this. We realized this, never to let it slip out and he was in our house a few months before everything settled down. They weren't so strict anymore then.

Of course, we had different parties before Hitler came. He couldn't expect us all to be for him. Nobody ever heard of a Hitler before. So, then they didn't kill those people anymore, but in the beginning they did away with them.

A: What kind of job did your mother's brother have in the the government?

K: Well, a commissioner, it's almost like a governor, but he was not professional governor. It was on the side of his own job. He was a doctor engineer. He had his own job and this he did on the side. I don't think he got paid for this. He tried to prevent Hitler to take over. Now, my father was on the other side. He thought Hitler was good.

A: Did you hear, during the 1930's, any type of stories about Adolf Hitler, some of the things that he did?

Maybe some of the things that he did to help people out, any good stories. We tell, for instance, about some of our presidents, some of the real nice things they have done. Did you hear any stories like that about Hitler?

K: No, when somebody runs for something, you don't hear nothing what they did or praise or something. All the people are interested in is what is he going to do for the country, not that he did good before. They ran differently than here. I've seen the conventions on television. But we are interested in his schooling and special political and history and if he's really knowledgeable enough to lead a country and how he intends to keep those promises before he gets voted in. But you vote a dictator in and he's in; you cannot get him out anymore. You notice in Russia what he did. When the people realize how he's going to ruin the country, really, it was too late for everybody. You could not open your mouth anymore and talk against him. By this time they executed people when you talked against him. So, we whispered against him, but not out loud, not in the public.

We were not even allowed to listen to a foreign station like England, but we did it anyhow. England broadcast like the broadcasting here, over to Europe and we locked the doors and put the radio on the ears and listened to it. We knew what was coming then because they told us

A: Did you ever go to any of the rallies where Hitler was? Did you ever see him?

K: Yes sir.

A: Okay, can you describe one of those rallies?

K: Well, he always rode standing up in the car, straight. Nürnberg was one of his main cities, Nürnberg and Munich, so we seen a lot of him. He built that big stadium out there with this congress hall. He imitated this from Rome. They built in a lake. Three years it took to put the pipes in the lake and then they built the congress hall. And just about from all the nations of the world they came once a year for a big congress called the Reichsparteitag. And Hitler was there, of course. He was there to every doing. Sometimes he stood there six hours, then he showed the world mostly how powerful Germany is and it was very powerful, our Army. Arbeits Dienst was the working force, we were in uniforms; the Hitler Jugend paraded. The Army, they were drilled a

whole year. Everything shined on the uniform and everything had to be just so-so or else they got bad punishment afterwards.

And then he held his powerful speeches; how he's going to save the world; how Germany has to be expanded. They took the colonies away from us in the First World War. We had five colonies and England, France, America took those colonies away and the people had to come back in that small country. He wanted a lot of kids, families with a lot of kids and expand Germany. I think he wanted to be the world leader but not dictating the rest of the countries. He could never dictate them, the Russians, but he wanted to just expand and told the world how he was going to do it. And we had them from just about every nation here in Nürnberg. You see nothing but uniforms for about twelve days.

And they built tents, big tents, and every family had to take so many in--we didn't have to--we volunteered. We got paid for this. One day was Air Force Day, the next day was Work Force Day, the Arbeits Dienst, then the Army Day; then the fun day. They had like a big volksfest and just about everything was free.

A: Okay, let's describe the Nurnberg Sports Arena.

K: It's still in existence. It's still there, but they made a beautiful park out of it. Well, the congress hall was just about the hugest thing they built and bleachers all around and I'd say about ten thousand people fit in there easily. And next to it he built, in the forest, a folks festival, dances, all kind of doings there and this was free. This was right next to it. And a big beer tent, of course. Bands played Marshmusik and Dance. And it's not only one sports arena, there's about five all around there because they needed different things for different doings. When the helicopters land you need a bigger one; when you had a smaller doing you used the other field next to it. And they don't know what to do with the big congress hall, it's empty. It would fit a big outfit in there. First they used it for refugees. Now they keep it empty and they were going to break it down, but it's going to stay there for future generations to see. And it's really something to see.

A: Do you want to describe the flags that used to fly over the stadium?

K: We had the swastika flag and the German flag, which was

black, white, red; now it's black, red, gold, And oh, there was flags from every nation there like you have in the Olympics or something similar, but more and more powerful yet. You saw this, you couldn't help it. There would be guys loving it. There was nothing bad about it like they were making it out to be and Hitler himself was a very gentle man. I don't think he would break a flower without putting it in the water right away or hurting an animal or anybody.

My opinion is that it was the advice of Streicher. You heard of Streicher? He was a teacher with a filthy mouth and we were there when he held the rally. Our teacher led us away. She could have got killed for this; and the students, the college students who were a little bit older, they all left. He was talking to himself almost, except for the few who were with him.

And then Himmler, which was the big SS [Schutzstaffel] officer--you know what SS is--his grandmother was Jewish. He was the one who did away with a lot of Jews. They came at night. In Nürnberg his grandmother was buried in a big cemetery right next to our house. We lived next to the cemetery. He came at night and removed the tombstone because she was a stern Jew and he was the one who was against the Jews so much. Hitler got ill advised.

He put people in who helped him come in power who probably had no political background whatsoever. You see this with Carter here too, right? And when Hitler took over the Army, that was another big mistake. Our generals were highly trained and highly intelligent and they knew what they were doing. Hitler was only a corporal. What did he really know about strategy? That is another thing we lost the war; he should never take over the Army. Right? So, what else would you like to know?

A: Let's talk about the attempt on Hitler's life.

K: Yes, there was three times an attempt and three times it failed, unfortunately. The last one was an officer who had an attaché case with a bomb in it and the bomb did get off, but didn't kill anybody. Our officers were really brave. They should have taken their gun and walked up and just shot him in the head at this time. At this time all the people were for it, getting him out of the way. In the beginning, no. Up to four years war they still believed in him. They still believed that we had to defend ourselves against communism, until we learned better, that he was the one who start

it. And at this time people were just sick of the whole thing; how they bombed our beautiful cities. And somebody said, "Somebody should put him away and stop this." That's why Rudolph Hess--you know who Rudolph Hess is--flew over to England. He had connection with England and he try to make peace with them on his own and he was put in jail there. He's still in jail in Berlin. I don't think he did something wrong. He just tried to stop the war. He tried to save what was there to save. There was nothing to save anymore.

He asked his handful of people and one of those congress' as we heard it on the radio, "Do you want a total war?" They screamed, "Yes." We didn't want it. We weren't asked if we wanted. Total war means every woman, every kid, you get killed, you get killed and that's all there is to it. And in the end we were told to shoot ourselves, never to give up. Before we surrender, every woman, every child, every man, should shoot themselves. Did you know that he had in mind to kill his own people with the atomic bomb? They developed it someplace--I forgot the name of the city--Pforzheim, underground. If he could have developed it sometime, he would have dropped this over Germany to wipe us all out because no way in the world was he to surrender. Thank heavens he couldn't anymore. America discovered this and bombed it before he could do it.

A: When the attempts were made on his life, what happened to some of the people around him?

K: Oh, there was three thousand people involved, but only a handful knew about it, the rest were the driver of the car, some guard, whoever, he had them all executed, three thousand of his best men, officers. He also had Rommel executed. I don't know if you know this. Rommel didn't get killed in the war. He gave him a pill. He advised Hitler to stay in Africa or whatever. I don't know nothing about military strategy. When Hitler know it better, then the general, he went against him, secretly, and of course, see, he was a big general and he also was liked by the USA and he wanted to make it look like he got killed. He gave him a pill and Rommel said good-bye to his wife, went out in the forest and then took the pill, killed himself.

A: What was the reaction when Hitler declared war on the United States?

K: We nearly passed out, the whole family and everybody

else. On the radio, "I am declaring"---I hear this like today with his big powerful voice---"I am declaring war against the United States." Our mouths popped open. My mother, she took the map. She said, "I like to show Hitler that map. Doesn't he know how big that country is?" We were four years in the war already. Here he's declaring war on the United States. Now this is when just about everybody went against him except his SS officers around him, but just about everybody tried to get him out. I could never understand why they didn't succeed with this.

- A: When the war finally came to Germany in the sense on the air raids and the German cities were being bombed, where were you at this time?
- K: At this time, young people were not allowed to leave the city. We were air raid forces. We had boots on and we had to go out during the bombing and try to save the people who were under the ashes. A German girl or boy never fears anything. Inside we were shaking, but you never showed the fear. You were not allowed to show it. During day, the Americans, they bombed two hours. You could look at your clock and exactly after two hours it was finished and after we cleaned a little bit up, the English came and bombed forty-five minute; and that went on for two years. The English radio station told us when they were coming. But like I said, we were not allowed, there was a death sentence if they catch you to listen to an English station. We were afraid of our neighbors, anybody squealing on us. But my sister especially, she listened and she said, "They are coming and they are bombing this part of Nürnberg." They know exactly which part they bombing. "Let's get out of here," but you were not allowed to get out. The English told us to get out. "We are bombing." We were in sections Johannis, Altstadt, Gibitzenhof, whatever. "Tonight we bombing Johannis. How get out women and kids." The kids were allowed to get out. The mothers, too, but not the men and the young girls. We stayed. When you sit on a telephone, any job, typewriter, whatever, you sit even if they shot in this window and tried to kill you.

And after the bombing was over, the whole city was burning, no water, no gas, no roof, no doors, no windows. They all flew apart. The dirt was about a yard high in the house from all the debris, glass, whatever. We cleaned it out, waited for the next bombing and when this was over, we cleaned out again, put cardboards on the windows and whoever had a stove in the neighborhood

we cooked on them, the whole neighborhood together. Whoever still had a roof over their head, we stayed in each others houses.

A: Was there anything of a military significance in Nürnberg or were they just bombing neighborhoods?

K: Yes, yes there was. We had factories, but they also bombed the hospitals with a big red cross on top, baby hospital and our homes and it was next to a cemetery. There was no factory nearby and it was not a mistake because they also came flying down, those smaller planes, and shoot the people walking on the street. They shot the kids out of my friend's hands walking in the country, little girl, two years old; and that flyer definitely couldn't say he thought it was a soldier. There was a lot of wrong-doing on both sides. But this side here wasn't exactly angels either.

A: What was produced in the factories in Nürnberg?

K: Oh, parts of ammunition. We have more, gingerbread factories, and toy factories, but one factory was turned over for military guns and stuff.

A: During the war, were you on rations?

K: Yes, during the war we were on rations, but they weren't too much. It was like no rations at all. I mean, food rations, we had plenty food; clothes, no. You couldn't get shoes or nothing. We just wore whatever we could. We wore men's shoes and men's clothes because our own clothes burned or got torn from bombing. So, we helped each other out, whatever fit from six to twelve. And to go to work, we saved one pair of shoes to go to work, because I was a dental hygienist and you had to be clean; you couldn't come with rags. But at home we just wore what we had. But in food we suffered nothing.

We suffered after the war for three years. It was a Morgenthau Plan and I don't think anybody in this country knows about it; the plan of Morgenthau, whoever he was. He was one of your leaders here. He said to keep the German men in prison and kill the German women and the kids, starve them to death, which a lot of them did. And three years the rations we had was for two days and you had to stretch it out for four weeks and you never seen a fat person in the country no place. They all got thin and then I was eighty pounds and I'm a big boned girl. I couldn't carry a suitcase anymore. And you also had to work during this time. We were too

weak to work. We stole a tomato, a potato, a peach from a tree, the farmers shot at us. After three years, in the United States, the churches got together and cut in because the food was there, we were just not allowed to have it. I got caught with a candy bar, which I got from a GI and ate it in the streetcar and got arrested, was eight days in jail for eating this candy bar.

A: Let's go back to the war. Did you lose any family members from the bombing?

K: Yes, my brother was a music student and every young man was required two years army and his professor advised him to join voluntarily, then he has a choice of the branch and then he can finish his studies afterwards, not break up in the middle of it. So, he joined and got trained hard and he came home one day and told us, "I'm not allowed to talk, but we are going to Poland. I am pretty sure of it." And he was the first one in the city killed, cruelly, very cruelly. He was wounded while he was out on patrol and the rest ran and they couldn't take him with them and they found him later. Every piece of his body was cut off; fingers, eyes out. That's how they found him after they beat the Polish people.

The Polish people were very cruel even before the war. The Hungarians, the Yugoslavians, the Italians, they were all for Germany against the communism, but not the Polish people; and they were the ones who got helped the most from the Germans. Two hundred years back that country was farmland and they were uneducated and asked German people to come over to develop their country and show them how to build land. They built Warsaw and built their cities and they stayed on like in America. And after two hundred years--before the war, they considered themselves citizens of Poland--Poland wanted them out, certainly wanted them out. They considered themselves Polish people like you consider yourself American; I don't care where you come from. And they start torturing the kids and women because you could spot the German. They were clean all the time and you could spot them. You know exactly this was a German, this was a Polish.

Do you want to hear this about one family? This was before the war. They found a whole family with their tongue nailed to the table, and Hitler knew about all this. And he kept warning them to leave our people alone. They were living in Poland; kept their German language; went to German schools; but they also spoke

Polish, were considered German-Polish people. And he said, "You leave them alone or I'm coming in. We are a powerful country and we're going to take over Poland and stop this." And he warned them at least ten times. I heard this myself on the radio. He marched in and he overran this country in a few days, right? But my poor brother was one of the first ones killed. And we didn't ship the bodies back. There was nothing to ship back. Later we got a tombstone from him. He was nineteen years old.

A: Did you lose any other family members?

K: Cousins, yes, three cousins. One was the captain, the priest.

A: Do you want to tell me about him?

K: He shot himself. He couldn't take the shame of losing the war. When they captured him, he was a very proud person. They took him out everyday. There was American people to execute him. Lieutenant give the command to execute him and when they shot, they were all blind [blank] shots, but he never knew when the real thing comes. They wanted to blindfold him. He said, "No blindfold." And they didn't shoot him, but then he shot himself because you can see, there was the shame of losing the war.

A: How did he get a gun?

K: Oh, the guns were there. You could find guns anyplace; maybe from a GI. I don't really know where he got the gun from, but there's guns around someplace.

And another cousin, he was sixteen years old. They drafted him the last few days. He was a medical student, a very brilliant fellow, the only son they had; and his father was Mayor of Bayreuth. He got killed the last few days.

And the doctor I worked for, his oldest son, the last ten days, from a bomb. Not outside, he didn't go out anymore.

And do you want to hear when the American people came into Nürnberg, their Army?

Our house, we were the fortunate ones, there still was walls there and we still could rebuild it. It wasn't too badly damaged. We only had twenty-eight bombs in

the house, hanging down the ceiling, small bombs, And a big one in front of the house. We had to put a board over to get out of the door, like a bridge. And here comes about eight German soldiers and want to shoot out of our windows and there come hundred tanks and my mother told them, "You shoot out those windows, they going to walk over this house like nothing. You cannot stop a hundred tanks. Now get lost. Go over in the cemetery--where do you put the dead people--funeral home. Lay in a casket and hide yourself. Give up. You cannot save the city anymore." And they did, so our house got saved. And we were deadly afraid. They told us, "Don't eat any candy from them. Everything is poisonous," propoganda against the United States.

We never seen a colored person before, only in the circus maybe. And here comes black people and we thought they were beautiful because we never seen one before. And my visitors here, they thought the same thing, "We were speechless what beautiful people those are."

Anyhow, the GI's were not allowed to talk to us and we were not allowed to get in contact with them. But my parents all hid in the cemetery and the house, like I said, there was no doors, so the GI's came in and went through the house and we had souvenirs and wine and all kind of stuff they wanted, watches, radios, thay liked all those things. So, they could have taken everything, it was there, but they didn't. But they came back in the evening and asked my mother if she has wine, watches, radios and she say, "No." And they say, "You lie, we seen, it's here." So okay, "I give it to you." But they did not take it for nothing. They brought us food for it see; we give them a watch, we got a pound of butter. I give them a radio, I got five candy bars or whatever. I gave them china, a whole set of china; I got a box of candy for it.

A: The furniture, do you want to talk about the furniture?

K: We had a dining room set. It was hand carved. I don't know the wood, but it was very good wood and it was like brand new because when we were kids, we had to take our shoes off in the house, not go on the furniture with everything. So, here comes a captain's wife, seen the dining room set with six chairs, table, grandfather clock in with crystal glass and everything. Oh, she likes this. She gave me one carton of cigarette for it and she shipped it to the United States. In the end we almost sit on the floor. We didn't need the

furniture. We sold everything we had for food.

And the GI's, they were so happy the war was over. The first thing they all did, fell on their knees in the churches and cried and prayed; and they were supposed to be our enemies? And the prison camps, with the Russians and Polish people, the last two years they were not in prison camps anymore. They let them out. They let them work. They reported back in the evening. And of course, when the GI's came, they robbed and raped for three days, robbed and raped and the GI's stopped it; and it was a Jew who stopped it. He spoke German. The camp was right close by and they came in my house and they were drunk. They asked for more whiskey and my mother said she don't have it and my mother had hunger typhoid at this time. We had nothing anymore. And my sister fled in the attic and I was not at home. So, we had no lights, the moon was shining, her hair was down to the floor. She had beautiful long hair; very sick and weak. And the drunk GI's helped themselves to the drinks then.

We have had a whole cellar full of wine. In Germany you find drinks anyplace, wine especially, good wine, not this junk they sell over here. And they said to my father, "You go out. You go to hell." And my mother tried to explain to them she's an old lady, she has a son that got killed the same age as you are, but she couldn't speak English and my brother had his sword from the Army hanging on the wall yet; and they wanted this so she gave it to them, but they wanted love and in desperation she told them, "Very sick, very sick, V.D." That's when they all fled, they didn't want no part of her anymore. (laughter) It saved her from being raped, actually raped. Next day they came back and my sister said, "I don't think they allowed to do this. They are not allowed to talk to us." We found out in no time, the rules. So, she went over to the Army camp.

A: Did you speak a little English? Did your mother speak a little English?

K: No, none, but for some reason we understood them. My sister went to the commander who was a German Jew and told him that they come in every night and want a drink in our house and then they want to make love with the woman. She also told the GI's, "This is old rest home here, rest home, old people, no young girls here," but it wasn't true. And the commander says, "I send a guard there, to your house." So, the guard was out

in the garden; he's supposed to stay there all night. Then he motioned to us he don't like it out there. He wants to come inside, sleep on the couch, drink with us. And when the GI's came again he talked to them in English and they threw a bottle against the wall and left and left us alone.

But then, after awhile, they got their celebration out of their system that they won the war and became friendly, really friendly; and they find out we have nothing to eat. And this is something, they want to get in contact with German people. It don't necessarily had to be girls. They put up with my father, anybody, just get in contact with the people. They were away from home; they fought the war. They were happy it was over. They want to be friendly.

And the ex-prisoners, the Polish and Russian ex-prisoners still robbing. A Russian ex-prisoner helped us. He took his gun, "Out, you're not robbing this house, you're not doing this." He protected us because we helped him. And during the bad times he carried my suitcase home. I couldn't understand him, he just grabbed it and run home with it and then he motioned to me he want something to eat, so we gave him little bit of bread. And then he motioned he wants something to smoke, so we gave him homemade cigars and he came everyday for a little bit of bread, tomatoes and cigars. And he stood in front of our house and told them, "No, not this house."

A: Okay, there are basically American soldiers and Russian Soldiers in Nürnberg now?

K: No, the Russians were prisoners, German prisoners, and the GI's were the ones who had the victory. Okay, they were the ones who came in, not the Russians, we had no Russian soldiers whatsoever, but they were out of camps and they wanted revenge of the people and the GI's protected us. And we asked them, "You are dear friends, you're the Russian's friends, how come you protect us? They told us, "Russian, no good; we like German people." They were on our side right away. We had hardly no problem with any of them. The first fighting troops were beautiful.

The German people did anything for them. They brought their dirty laundry, we washed it for them, next day, ironed it, picked it up. We got a piece of soap or a candy bar for it. And then they stole in their own kitchen. In the morning, the cook, there wasn't an egg

or a loaf of bread, there was nothing. Everything was stolen and they took it out and gave it to the people. But this is something, their sergeant said, "Now, you have to suffer," but they didn't suffer. They had so much food they couldn't care less if they skipped a meal. They helped us out tremendous.

Then they took the fighting troops back and those were the good soldiers. And they opened up the jails here and told them, "You join the Army, your jail sentence is suspended." And they sent them over as occupation troops and they gave America a very bad name. They robbing, they still doing it, robbing and killing and misbehaving something terrible and for a time, the U.S. Army trained them here, how to behave, men that fit in. But no, right now we have the same thing again. We have very, very bad troops over there, most of them on dope and nobody wants them in the restaurants, everywhere. They aren't wanted in their homes anymore, bad, bad situation.

But the first troops made a very good impression on all of us, even your colored people, they did not rape or anything, no way. If they had any love contact with any girls, it was voluntarily on the side of the girls; raping was out. But right now they're doing it.

- A: Let's talk about the time period then, from the time the war is over until you left Germany to come to the United States.
- K: Well, we had to do something to get some food so everybody tried to get in an American kitchen to peeling potatoes, kitchen work, whatever. But when the captain saw the papers, they wanted to send us in the office. "Oh, you'll make a secretary for captain so and so." So, we played stupid. I typed with two fingers and very slow. And the captain said, "I cannot have this." And the sergeant said, "Well, give her time, maybe she's out of practice." I said, "No, I always type like this." "Well," he said, "your paper says you type so much." "Well then I forgot this." (laughter) I asked the captain to put on the paper, "Too stupid for the job." So, I got out and got my rations. We then volunteered for maids, kitchen help. You see, doctors there, professors, they all wanted big kitchen help jobs and they hired us and we worked in the kitchen for a while and got the food, all we can eat, but it didn't help our people. We wanted them to have something to eat too. So, we told the sergeant, the master sergeant in charge of the kitchen, who was a colored person, he

can keep our salary if he let us take something home. Close the eyes when we take a half a pound of bacon, a loaf of bread or whatever, which he did. That went on for about a year and they caught him and court-martialed him for this because he kept our salary. We were never asked to testify, otherwise we would told them, "We left him that salary." We didn't want that poor guy to be court-martialed.

And from that kitchen I jumped to my own profession, dental. The 87th dental clinic in Nürnberg, the whole hospital was headquarter of the whole Germany for the GI's and I was fortunate to get a job there. And a colonel from Texas, I forgot his name, and Colonel Grossman from New York were in charge of this and they gave me a tryout, fourteen days. And we were really trained the way they want us to do the job and I worked there until we came to America.

It was a craze going on at this time. We were disillusioned with our own country. My husband was handicapped with one eye. He couldn't get a job handicapped. It happened in the Army, so they should give him a job. I was so angry with that whole country, I said, "Well, we have an opportunity, get out." Then we had no housing, but they built the churches up first. That angered the people. We didn't need the churches. We needed housing for the people. You can pray anyplace without a church. But the churches were built up and the people lived in the cellars. And we had to live with our parents, very cramped, two small rooms and here comes the opportunity to get out and have your own home. So, we applied for it.

My girlfriend here married a GI in East Liverpool and she wanted us here. So, we applied. Four weeks and the consulate called up, "Your visa is ready." We were not ready at this time. Then my husband had also a job and a good one. I was working as a dental hygienist, he worked construction. We start buying furniture, everything was brand new. We saved for our own home. At this time you could save and then they build a home for you and you buy it off like you do here. When we got that visa, so what are you going to do now? I told my colonel, "I am going to quit the job, but I'll be back. I want to see what America looks like." He said, "Anytime you come back you get your job back."

So, we came over here and we were very disappointed because America was a little bit backward with jobs, the job conditions are not good here. The vacation is

not so good then in Germany, The medication, they have to pay for everything. We had socialized medicine. We got vacation after hospitalizations paid by the socialized medicine and they trying to tell you here this is communist. It is not, it's the best thing that ever happened to them. And they are not getting broke because people there don't drink so much, a little better than here anyhow.

We came here and we had to do the lowest jobs there were. I became a waitress, which I never did in my life and I was just about the dumbest waitress in the United States. I didn't know the names of food. When somebody asked me for rye bread, I asked them if it was something to drink or to eat. I didn't know the names. I knew the medical terms, but not those words. I didn't learn them. I was slow too, I wasn't fast, but that fellow who hired me, he also was German descent and he put up with me. When he saw what happened, he only give me one table with five fellows and they amused themselves with the German girl who couldn't speak too much English and didn't know the drinks or nothing. But I made very good money. Each time I brought a drink up to this table, they gave me a dollar tip.

So, I stuck with that job, then I tried to get a dental hygienist job and I have proof, papers here, that I was a very good one and I was told they do not accept my certificate. They do accept doctor's certificates, but not dentist and dental hygienist. I could be a dental assistant, which I tried for awhile, but I was on salary. That means he can work you all kind of hours without pay, fifty dollars a week, while I made three hundred dollars as a waitress a week. So, I went back to my waitress job. And I almost got stuck with it. They asked me to go to Columbus for two years. All I really need was a course in English with all those foods I didn't know, but I learned a lot in the GI clinic there and I proved to them I can do it without going another two years. But I never bothered because in the meantime my husband got a good job.

And we planned on staying here one year and go back. Then he got promoted. So he says, "Wait awhile, we cannot slap them in the face right now." Okay, we wait a little bit. "Now, we are going back." And it went on and on and on, "No, we are staying." And when we traveled back, you are homesick for Germany, when you are there, you miss this big country here too. You are torn two ways constantly. We learned to love them both and that's all.

Want to hear Riga, you never heard about this, when I was sent to Russia,

A: Okay, let's go back and talk about that now, when you were in Russia.

K: Well, I was working for a dentist and he got bombed out. So, in between jobs they hurried up and drafted me for the factory and that was the last thing in the world I wanted to do.

A: About what time was this, what year?

K: In 1943 and I was in fourteen days, very unhappy and I played the same trick again, playing stupid and I was called in the office. They were going to put me in jail and I told them, "When you're stupid, you're stupid. There is nothing you can do about it. I just cannot do this job." So, they gave me the simplest job there was and I still messed it up, purposely. I wanted to be thrown out again, but they didn't. They threatened me with jail. They know I played stupid. So, I wrote to Alfred Rosenberg, who was like Kissinger here, prime minister, that with my qualifications, I don't want to stay in that factory. It didn't take long, fourteen days, I got an answer with a letter. You sign up for Russia and you get out of the factory, in a German dental clinic. So, anything was better than this. I signed up and they put me in this Civilian Occupation Organization. This means the field in occupation in uniform and that was a great organization.

First we were sent to Berlin for a crash course in Russian, Russian language and just about everything because when the Russian people knew there were German people in town, they looked up to us like God. A German knows everything. Somebody has a baby, they called a German to help to deliver the baby. Somebody needs an operation, call the German girl, she does it. So, we were trained in medicine, which I knew a lot already except bringing babies to the world. I learned this up there, and well, anything you could think of. And then we were sent on the way on a train to Rovno in Ukraine and it took three days because they hid mines in between, some trains blew up.

My best friend was from Poland, a German girl who lived in Poland, she traveled with me. She was a medical technician. Then it starts up like in the army, "Anybody shorthand, typing, bookkeeping, step forward, Any-

body this, this, step forward." I did not step forward. I waited to the end then see what they give me. "What do you know, nothing? Why did they send you here then?" He looked at my papers, "Well, we don't have a job for you right now," suited me fine. I got paid for three hundred and fifty dollars a month, which was a lot of money and a brown uniform almost similar that the one with the work force, but with the fur coat, boots, everything.

We had everything and then we got put in homes first. They were private houses. Two girls in one house and we could have a maid if we wanted, but we didn't want to. They were pretty nice, but before you went out at night you had to make, "Shh, scare the mice away and the cockroaches." They weren't too clean. We cleaned this up, this place. And I was there about four weeks or so and they couldn't find a job for me so they sent me to Nikolayev, which is in the Black Sea. It looks like Florida there, really beautiful. And I pulled the same thing. I did not work. At this time the Russians got closer and we had to pull back. So, I went back to Berlin.

When I arrived there, I couldn't find any of the two officers from our organization. They were bombed, the heater was still there and the whole city was in ashes. It was a mess, still burning. And I knew they going to come again, that same night. They were to put me in a hotel and the next day see what to do with me. And I got out, went to the railroad station, full of dirt. All day I walked around, no food, no water, and dirty. The first thing I did, took a shower there and sit on the suitcase and waited for a train to take me back to Nürnberg. I got on one of those freight trains. I arrived back in Nürnberg and it didn't take long, they sent me to Riga, Latvia, Lettland up in north of Russia and it's very beautiful there. Riga is called the Paris of the East, very beautiful city.

And after three days I noticed there wasn't a man in that city. I didn't see any men, just very beautiful and very highly intelligent girls. So, I ask our dental assistant, "Where's all your men?" And she told me, "The Russians have killed them all from fifteen to sixty." And I didn't believe her so she took me out in the forest. You could see, some hands were sticking out, they weren't quite dead, they tried to get out. They shoveled them in, they shot them and shoveled them all in and you still could see the blood there.

Well, I worked for a German doctor. It was not the Army. It was a field occupation and we're supposed to work for

the German employees, but we treated a lot of people from Lettland. They spoke so good German they fooled us. We didn't know till they're sitting in the chair, then I find out they were not Germans. And the treatments were free so they got all their treatments free. Two doctors, two lady doctors were in Lettland and a German doctor and one German assistant, she was a German mayor's daughter, very nice girl. And we had Jewish, from the concentration camp, Jewish people fixing our dental clinic up, plumbing, whatever. And we were not allowed to talk to them, but this doctor of mine, he says, "Don't be foolish. I will not tell anybody you bring them food. They brought us toys, they make toys for us and you bring them food. That's what they want."

And we toured this concentration camp, but they were alive and as far as what I saw, those people were treated pretty good. I didn't see any killing or anything. We didn't think concentration camps were really bad because what we understood they did with the people-- my husband's uncle was in and a neighbor of mine was in. They were drunks, they beat their wives, they didn't give them any money. They put them in there, after three years they came out a perfect person almost. So, we thought it was not a bad idea putting those bums in. Why they put the Jews in? I really never understood this because those people didn't do anything. Well, this concentration camp in Riga, they used those people for working. We were short on labor power, so those people were qualified. Everybody had a trade.

But one time, I didn't actually see it, this was in Rovno where a big German Nazi took me out in the woods and showed me where they killed the Jews. I didn't believe it and he says, "I show it to you." They rounded the Jews up in Poland and in Russia and shot them and buried them, just what the Russians did with the people in Riga. And he showed me the ground and he said it was a pitiful sight and there's nothing we could do to help them. I seen this same thing, hands sticking out, I was sick for two days. I couldn't eat nothing. And I was calling a good friend of mine, was a German SS officer, they trusted him. And he says, "I cannot tell you anything, I am not allowed to talk, but after the war I'm telling you something. Your hair is going to stand up." So, they must have done things like this, but not in masses like they make out like the Holocaust. Maybe some of them rebelled. I really don't know why they killed them.

And there was a lot of Jews here, we went to school with

them. Now them people I went to school with, they all were there after the war. So, I guess those people probably rebelled. They also killed the Germans when they rebelled against the chief. It didn't make no difference who you were, you didn't go against Hitler.

In Riga we were surrounded by the Russians. I was in when the fight was going on. One day our German soldiers moved out of Riga and there we were left with three thousand women and our leaders fled too. So, we were on our own so to speak. And we moved out of our apartment in a mess hall, slept there for protection, protecting each other. We had a few old men there yet. And then we were shipped up to Reval (Estland) on a train and the locomotive, the engine left; and they left the train out in nowhere, in nobody's land. There we were for three days, no food, no water. We discovered a lake where we swam in and took our clothes off and found out later that the German Army was close by and watched us everyday. (laughter) They had fun. But we couldn't care less, as long as we wash.

And then one girl had connection with the German Army and called her boyfriend up and he sent an engine. We were shipped back to Riga. But in the meantime we were surrounded by the Russians, the whole Riga. We couldn't get out anymore and they bombed the city and it was fun. It was a laugh. They threw little bombs, little ones. We watched them things coming down. We almost caught them with our hand. It was like a firework. We weren't afraid of their bombs at all. When they bombed, everybody was out laughing. They couldn't hurt us with those things, comparing to the American bombs. (laughter)

Anyhow, they tried to get as many women out as possible, and they knew there was no way. So, I was one of the privileged who got a ticket. An older lady, she was fifty, and I was in the twenties, got a ticket. We supposed to sneak out at four o'clock in the morning without letting the other girls know. I didn't have the nerves to desert them, so we didn't.

We had a case of liquor, we drunk so we didn't really know what was going on. We didn't want to face death. We knew we facing it; we facing raping and death. Raping was out. One day I got a gun, I think, with six bullets. I was told to kill with, five girls and the last one for myself. Do not be captured by the Russians because they were cruel. There wasn't one raping, there was twenty raping one girl. So, I told them, "Here's the gun," I made fun of it. I tried to cheer them up.

There was no way out. Some of them, the older ones, cried. And I used my love letters and added a lot of things to it to make them laugh. "I just want to kiss your hot lips one time. I want to lay my head on your hairy breast," and things like this. My boyfriends never wrote crap like this. And then I told them with the gun, "You know, when the Russians come, I think I take you first and then you and then you." I made fun of all of it. "And perhaps by this time the German soldiers rescue me and you're going to be dead and I'm going to be out." (laughter)

Well anyhow, it didn't come to this. Every night we were on alert, they got a ship so just about every night we went out on the pier, which was an hour drive and when we arrived there was no ship so we went back. Then a few nights later, "Now we got a ship." That went on and on. We lived good. We still had food and drinks and everything.

But how do I get my Lettish out? Our assistant and our doctor, they want to get out too because they'd worked for the Germans; they would have been the first ones killed. So, I had to smuggle them out. And the German secretary, she wanted to get out. She was my best friend. All right, we had to be smart. The Lettish girl, I put a uniform of mine on her and told her not to speak too much because she had an accent. "You go in. Your name is Katie Wunder," which was my maiden name, "and that's it." The next one was a German girl, "You make sure the guard changed. Go to a different guard. Your name is Katie Wunder and you lost your pass someplace and you go in, try to get in." The third one, I talked to the guard, occupied him and she smuggled behind my back with her little boy.

We had little boats that took us to the ship and two boats blew up, one with suitcases, one with women. While they were on the ship, we didn't know when that ship was going to leave. "Do not stay in one room. You occupy one, but walk around so nobody can question you, till the ship is moving and I come later."

Okay, I went back to the city. They say, "You are out of your mind, you are the only woman here." There was other ones who couldn't get out, but, "What are you doing here?" Then I went back to the clinic, took all the expensive instruments and the gold out, took it with me, went back to my apartment, took the curtains off, packed everything and hitchhiked back to the ship. That could have gone by then, There I came, it was still

there. It was about twelve o'clock at night, "So, who are you?" "Well, my name is Katie Wunder." There was already three here, but in the meantime they had a different guard. "And where's your identification?" "Well, it's in the suitcase. Do you want me to unpack that suitcase?" "No, well don't you have anything?" "Well you know me, I ate everyday at there and there." So, I got in and we all got out of this country.

But once before they had a rescue effort. They took us on a panzer, those tanks, Army tanks. There wasn't any of our leaders, they were cowards, they took off. So, we kind of hung on to the Army. Okay, in that time we were fighting our way through. Half way in I said, "Stop that tank. I want to go back home, I left my clothes there." They said, "She is crazy. She's worrying about her clothes." "Oh the heck, we get out somehow," and we did get out.

And my mother and father, they listen on the radio at home. They knew we were surrounded. Ever since my brother got killed she don't want to hear no parts of the war anymore. She didn't listen to the news anymore, but she did if she listened for me. Okay, my father was so weak he couldn't work anymore. He couldn't take it if a second one of our family would get killed. And then here I come, "You are my sunshine." They nearly passed out. My mother, she didn't say hello, nothing. She dropped everything, run away from me like she seen a ghost, over to the garden to my father, "She's here, she's here, she's here." They couldn't believe themselves.

My sister was in Litaven. She got out and she warned me, "Don't go back you'll never get out again." Well, she got out, I got out. And it still was all good times. When you're young you couldn't care less what happened to you. You know this?

A: Yes.

K: We were raised not to live for the country. We were raised to die for the country; always were told to give your life for your country, how stupid. The new generation, they don't want to die for anybody. They want to live. Right? But that was put into us, "You die for your country."

During the bombing in Nürnberg--I have to go back to this--my fiance died. He was in the Army, but he didn't die from a bullet wound. He died of a little infection

after he made his doctor, fourteen days later. And I don't want to live either anymore, so I volunteered for all those things anyhow, the most dangerous ones. So, what's life? You're nineteen, twenty years old, it means nothing." Today, I don't want to die.
(laughter)

A: Okay, lets go to the period after the war and talk about the Nürnberg trials.

K: Oh yes. They put all the generals, Rudolf Hess that got back from England, Streicher--do you know who Streicher was? He was the one who put the newspaper out against the Jews, made little children books with the Jews with horns on to rile them against the Jews already. And Airmarshall Goering killed himself during the trial. They smuggled a little pill he had under the tongue. Oh my gosh, I can't think of all those names. Anyhow, that courthouse was right close by where I lived; and the generals, their wives were there everyday and they were talking to each other. They were up in the cell and they talking down to their wives. As much as the people were against Hitler at this time, we all felt our generals were not guilty of any war crimes and they should not be executed. And we were up at night, one o'clock at night, seen them all coming out and heard the door click, each one, when they took them out of the cells and executed them, and what I understand, by hanging. But not the hanging who takes thirty seconds, the hanging where you hang a pick up in the mouth, that's how they hung them. And in the meantime America realized this was a wrong-doing. They executed the wrong people. Those doctors and killers who killed the Jews, okay, they should be killed too, but not a fighting soldier or general.

A: Can you recall anything else about the trials?

K: We didn't really get too many news about this. It was all broadcast over to the United States now. I don't know really who was the guilty ones. Streicher was guilty. Rudolf von Hess, committing war crimes, well, a war is a crime by itself really, he tried to make peace with England. He tried to save the world, not to keep going. He's still in jail, he's eighty some years old. The only one in Berlin and it costs the Germans a million dollar a year to keep that one prisoner in that big jail; nobody else is in there. But England, America and France, they tried for years to get him out. Russia, no. That's stupid, eighty-four years old. You probably learned more about the trial than I did, here.

- A: Let's back up back into the 1930's, back into the Nazi period. Were you concerned with art and the type of art which was being displayed at that time? Do you recall some of the . . . ?
- K: The art?
- A: The art, yes.
- K: No.
- A: What was the Nazi attitude on art?
- K: Oh, they were art lovers, very much so.
- A: What kind of art?
- K: Well, not the modern one, not Picasso too much, because we learned a lot of art in school. Germany is full of arts and everything and we have beautiful museums with all kind of art, all kind. Naked women was art, that wasn't considered dirty. We had statues, fountains on the street where the water comes out of here and out of here, from a male; they show the male organ and everything. And nobody--we were raised with this. Nobody thought anything dirty of this. They tried to raise us natural and show us the body, which is considered an art by itself. You paint a naked picture over there, they're hanging all over. You don't think nothing of it.
- A: All right, let me ask this: Did you ever hear talk of the burlesque houses that were in Germany?
- K: Yes, yes.
- A: What was the Nazi attitude toward the burlesque house?
- K: As long as they kept themselves covered, they were allowed to operate. It had to kind of stay clean. They tried to keep everything clean, no dirty books like porno or something like this. This was taboo. It was all thrown out and burned.
- A: Who did they blame this on?
- K: Jews.
- A: Was any of the Weimar Republic's doing. Was that government looked on as in terms of tolerating something like that?

- K: I wouldn't know that, really, I have no knowledge of this. But it was brought in by the Jews, there's no question about it. That's a fact. And it was thrown out but it's back now.
- A: Okay, how about music?
- K: Oh, music lovers. Germany is a country of music. There is only one music in the whole world you can live on which is the German's music.
- A: How about again during the Nazi period? The music that was brought in from the western world? What did they think about western world music?
- K: I don't like it. It's noise. It hurts my ears. I love folks music, Tess, perhaps, good ones with a meaning and operas, Wagner. We were raised with Wagner. We got the tickets for five dollars. The last rehearsal was five dollars. My uncle was the mayor and he got it free. And Hitler, he kind of helped artists, very much so.
- A: How about American jazz? Now that was very big in the twenties and the thirties.
- K: Jazz is okay.
- A: That was accepted in Germany?
- K: Jazz was accepted, yes, but not this blaring. We ran when we hear something like that. Want to hear my music I got on those tapes? Beautiful.
- A: Jazz was strictly a music by black Americans.
- K: Right, yes.
- A: How did that go over in Germany?
- K: Well, we liked black people, actually we liked all races. We weren't prejudice to anybody. They had to put it in our head first that Jews were not good. We still couldn't see it because we played with them. We grew up with them. They were our friends. And ones who said they were no good, "Prove it to me," but we shut our mouth more or less, nobody talked against it. Only among the family it was discussed where no outsider heard it. But they still came to our house, till later [when] they put them all together in concentration camps.

A: One last thing, you mentioned you had a copy of Mein Kampf [My Struggle],

K: Yes, I have it here,

A: Did you ever read the book?

K: Partly, it got boring. It's like the Bible, it gets boring after awhile. It repeats itself. I'm going to read it one of these days. I started it. Most of what he says I know anyhow. What I try to find out is why he hated the Jews so much and maybe when my husband is in Germany I read the whole book. I study the Bible. I study the Bible thoroughly, but it's boring too after awhile.

A: Where did you get the copy of Mein Kampf?

K: A friend of mine had it. Everybody had a copy of Mein Kampf like everybody has a Bible. And she brought it over to the sponsor who was a Polish Jew, with Polish descent, Jewish and he sponsored us. We didn't ask him for it. He just felt guilty for some reason. He was a brilliant man. He knows what was going on in Poland. And she gave him that book and I borrowed it from him and he gave me three days to read it. You don't read that book in three days unless you read 24 hours. All right, so I kept it a little bit longer and he passed away. So, I kept it.

A: This is after you came to this country?

K: Yes, we burned ours, we had one too.

A: The one that you had in Germany, did you ever read parts of that one?

K: No, as a child you didn't read those things.

A: Did your dad read it?

K: Yes, he did.

A: The whole book?

K: He read the whole book because he was interested in politics, science, religion. Science is mine and his too. And we had lots of discussions about all those things. One day he invited a rabbi, a priest, a minister and a Jehova witness and that was a very interesting conversation. And we were invited to it, teenagers.

But he asked them so many questions they couldn't answer; so did we. I was thrown out of religion when I asked the minister, when he told the story about Adam and Eve, the first people; and he came, killed his brother Abel and he went in a different land and got himself a wife--where did that wife come from when those were the first people? And he told me to shut up. A minister should answer the question, not tell the student, "Shut up." So, I went, told my father I don't have to go back anymore. But then I never went back to religion after. There's a lot of things. Jehova witness' were just about the only ones who almost answered all my questions except they don't know where the different races come from, most certainly not from Adam and Eve.

A: Did you ever come across Rosenberg's book?

K: Yes, but I don't recall too much of it.

A: But did you read it at the time?

K: I did.

A: The whole book?

K: That was the one who helped me to get out of the factory, the Rosenberg, Alfred Rosenberg.

A: Alfred Rosenberg?

K: Yes, he was the one who helped me get out of the factory. I think he is Jewish.

A: You knew him personally?

K: No, not personally. I've probably seen him, one of those congress. The only one we really were interested in was Hitler, what he looks like. I took pictures of him. He was so close by.

A: But you did read Rosenberg's book completely all the way through?

K: Yes, all the way through. But I don't recall too much of it. I got a lot of those books at home. I let my mother give them away, which I assume she did when she moved. And I read the Pfaffen, that means hypocrite, false priests, that's the murder of the priest, false priests. There was a lot of things going on. Hitler cleaned out. He was against homosexuality, lesbians

and all this. And the priests, when my cousin studied, his superiors, priests, were like this. He kept saying, "You're too young. I cannot tell you." But later I squeezed it out of him anyhow. And my father had this whole thing closed up. They used the boys. But he didn't become one, he was too good looking. (laughter)

- A: Well, I think that kind of brings us to an end. Is there anything you can think you'd like to add. I mean we've talked about a tremendous . . .
- K: Hitler did not allow a German girl to have sex before marriage and they briefed us. You were not allowed to have any kind of inheritance, bad inheritance, like mental. Mental could be brought on by inheritance. If you were, you could marry, but still you don't want to bring sick kids in the world, which was really a good idea. And he did away with the ones who couldn't be helped, mental illness. This was a fact. My cousin was one of them. You got a notice after awhile. "They passed away," which they didn't. They experimented on them and they give them a little shot, fall asleep.
- A: How did your cousin's parents react to that when they got that notice?
- K: Well, she was really on the loose end. They had to put her in a home. They kept her for long, but she wouldn't let her mother rest and she eat like a horse. She wasn't in very long and they got a notice she died and a few other ones. So, if they could be helped, they didn't do it, but if they couldn't they put them asleep, what they called it. And he tried to put the healthy kids in those homes where the nuts were. He said, "Why are they in those beautiful villas, they don't even know where they are? Why are the healthy ones living in slum areas," at this time. Today, we don't have no slum areas, none in Germany and no poor people either and hardly no working class. It's all middle class. They use the foreigners for this, low labor Italians. They come voluntarily. They are not forced to come over. Anything else you'd like to know?
- A: If you can think of anything, otherwise, I think we've gone, I'd say, a couple of hours.
- K: I think we covered quite a bit. I hope it is helpful to you.
- A: Oh yes, this has been very good, yes.
- K: My voice is very deep.