

FLASHBACK



PERSONENBESCHREIBUNG
SIGNALEMENT

Staatangehörigkeit: *Schweizer*
 Name: *Schüler*
 Beruf: *Wägen*
 Geburtsort: *Wägen*
 Geburtsdatum: *22. 3. 1939*
 Geburtsort (in englischer Sprache): *Wägen*
 Wohnort (in englischer Sprache): *Wägen*

Größe: *140cm*
 Haarfarbe: *brun*
 Augenfarbe: *blau*
 Haarfarbe der Augen: *brun*
 Größe der Augen: *brun*

Unterschrift des Inhabers
Alfred Frensch

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The children in these photographs were all rescued by the Kindertransport.

This document of identity is issued with the approval of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to young persons to be admitted to the United Kingdom for educational purposes under the care of the Inter-Aid Committee for children.

THIS DOCUMENT REQUIRES NO VISA.

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Name: *GROSSMANN Lore*
 Sex: *Female* Date of Birth: *1928/8/3*
 Place: *Vienna*
 Full Names and Address of Parents:
Grossmann Ignatz
2 Haslaner Strasse
Vienna 8



WORLD WAR II

The Children Who Escaped the Nazis

A heroic effort saved thousands of Jewish children from hate-fueled violence in the years before the Holocaust. Read one young survivor's story in this runner-up entry to the 2020 **Eyewitness to History** contest.

AS YOU READ, THINK ABOUT

What can we learn from talking with people who have experienced historical events?

On December 2, 1938, a ship docked at Harwich, England. Among its passengers were 196 children, all traveling without their parents. Clutching the few things they had with them, they stepped down the gangplank into a strange new country—and a new chance at life.

Less than a month before, the orphanage where they'd lived in Berlin, Germany, had been burned down by **Nazis**. The horrific act was

part of a shocking night of violence and destruction against Jewish homes, schools, businesses, and **synagogues** throughout Germany, as well as in Nazi-controlled Austria and part of Czechoslovakia. (Czechoslovakia is now two separate countries, Czechia and Slovakia.)

The attacks that took place on the night known as Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) set off alarm bells throughout Europe (see “Key Moments,” p. 28). There was no longer any doubt that Germany's Nazi government was intensifying its hostile

actions against the Jewish people of the continent.

In the wake of Kristallnacht, the British government agreed to take in and protect Jewish children from Nazi-controlled areas of Europe.

Between December 1938 and May 1940, a series of rescue efforts known as the Kindertransport saved the lives of some 10,000 children, most of them Jewish, fleeing from Nazi threats. (*Kinder* is German for “children.”)

But the parents and other loved ones of those children had no choice but to stay behind. →

VIDEO

Watch our video at junior.scholastic.com to learn more about Adolf Hitler's rise to power and the Holocaust.

Few of them survived [World War II](#) (1939-1945). The rest are among the 6 million Jewish people killed by the Nazis during the [Holocaust](#).

What led to the crisis that made the Kindertransport necessary? In January 1933, Adolf Hitler became Germany's leader. He and his Nazi Party had risen to power in part by tapping into [prejudice](#) against the country's Jewish residents, falsely blaming them for Germany's severe social and economic troubles after the nation's loss in [World War I](#) (1914-18). That type of prejudice (known as [anti-Semitism](#)) had long existed in Europe. But once in control, Hitler focused the full power of his government on wiping out all Jewish people.

It started with a series of new laws that restricted which jobs Jewish residents could hold, where they could live, and what they could



Flames consume a synagogue after a Nazi attack during Kristallnacht.

study. Soon Jewish citizens had to carry cards that identified them as being of Jewish [heritage](#). Failing to obey such laws could get a person beaten, arrested, or imprisoned.

By 1938, tens of thousands of Jewish people had fled Germany—but were finding fewer and fewer safe places to go. In July of that year, nations such as the United States, Great Britain, and France met to discuss the “[refugee problem](#).” Swayed by their own anti-Semitic

suspicious and fears, officials denied most Jewish refugees permission to cross their borders.

But that November, following Kristallnacht, British leaders changed course. A rescue operation was quickly organized, with the first Kindertransport group leaving Germany on December 1.

Over the next nine months, thousands of Jewish parents made the heart-wrenching decision to send their children away in order to



Nazis march at a 1933 rally in Nuremberg, Germany.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

NAZIS Members of a political party led by Adolf Hitler from 1921 through the end of World War II (1939-1945). The Nazis sought to dominate Europe and destroy the Jewish people.

ANTI-SEMITISM Hostility toward and prejudice against Jewish people. It can range from one person's unfair treatment of another to large-scale cruelties by a society. The most extreme example of official anti-Semitism was the “Final Solution,” the Nazis' plan to systematically murder all of Europe's 9.5 million Jewish people. By the end of World War II, 6 million had been killed—two-thirds of the continent's Jewish population.

save them. Hundreds of volunteers took on the perilous task of smuggling groups of kids from collection points in the cities of Berlin, Vienna, and Prague to seaports, then by ship or boat across the English Channel to Britain (see map, right).

Then, on September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded neighboring Poland. World War II had begun.

A few more rescue efforts succeeded after that, but the war effectively ended the Kindertransport. With German planes bombing British vessels in the English Channel, it became too dangerous to ferry kids across.

Charlotte Keiderling was one of the children who owed her life to a Kindertransport rescue. Born Charlotte Berger in Austria in 1931, she shared her story last year in this interview by eighth-grader Kyla Page.

Kyla Page: How old were you when war was declared? Do you remember that time?

Charlotte Keiderling: The actual war started in September 1939. I'd turned 8 in July. But life definitely changed before that, especially when Hitler invaded Austria in March of 1938.

We felt the change because we were Jewish. It was absolutely bizarre how people welcomed Hitler to Vienna. They gathered to yell as a big parade of soldiers, horses, and tanks came along. People thought Hitler would make everything right again after World War I. One evening, there was a knock on our



door and a Nazi asked my father to clean the pub across the street. My father refused.

I don't remember much as a little child, but I do remember Kristallnacht, when Nazis and others killed dozens of Jews, also ruining Jewish businesses and synagogues.

So when my parents heard that the prime minister of Great Britain, Winston Churchill, had agreed to take in 10,000 children up to age 17, they decided I should go. It was a hard decision for my parents—



sending their only child into an uncertain future—but they did it. [They told me that when I got to where I'd be going] I would live on a farm, and, as a child, I was excited about that.

This is an edited version of Kyla's interview.

KP: How were you affected by anti-Semitism?

CK: I felt it one day when a boy ran after me, shouting, “Jew! Jew!” Luckily, I got home safe.

KP: What was your parents’ attitude toward the Nazis? Did they teach you to fear the Nazis or to forgive them?

CK: I never felt hatred for them. It was never part of me. I just felt a great sadness.

KP: Did you regularly see soldiers or ever see or hear war going on near your house?

CK: When the soldiers first marched in, I saw them, but otherwise I think my mother protected me from seeing too much.



KP: What were the main reasons for your separation from your parents?

CK: The main reason was because my parents heard that all Jewish children who stayed in Austria would be killed. Later, when my mother was asked if I could move from England to Paraguay [in South America], she

replied, “Take my child as far away from Hitler as possible.” At that point, I think my mother knew she would never see me again.

KP: What was your impression of the Kindertransport?

CK: Each child was allowed to bring a little suitcase with some clothes, a

KEY MOMENTS

Germany and the Nazis



1933

Hitler Rises to Power

Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler is named chancellor of Germany. Once in power, the Nazis start to fire Jewish people from government jobs and ban them from public places.



1938

Kristallnacht

On the night of November 9, Nazis launch anti-Jewish attacks in multiple countries, destroying synagogues and Jewish-owned shops. About 30,000 Jewish men are sent to concentration camps.



1939

An Invasion Sparks War

On September 1, Germany invades Poland, setting off World War II. Within two years, Germany has invaded France, Belgium, and the Soviet Union. It aims to dominate all of Europe.

AP IMAGES (DINING HALL); GEORGE RINHART/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES (1933); SPINDLER/ULLSTEIN BILD VIA GETTY IMAGES (1938); ULLSTEIN BILD/THE GRANGER COLLECTION (1939)



Kindertransport youth and a guide head for dinner at a British camp.

little food, a blanket, and a toy. After I said goodbye to my father, I got on the train and lay on some cardboard on the floor. It was too loud for me to sleep, so I cried and cried until a volunteer woman found what the matter was and put me on a seat, where I finally slept. In the morning, my blanket was gone. When we got off the train in Holland [the Netherlands], people were more kind and helpful.

KP: Were many children on the train crying? How did you feel?

CK: Many were crying. After we reached Holland in the evening, we spent a night on a ferry, going across the English Channel. The next morning, we landed at Dover, England, where I met my uncle and aunt. Then five of us kids went off in a horse and buggy to our new home, a Christian community of 300 people.

KP: Was it hard to get used to your new home?

CK: At first, I cried a lot. I also wrote many letters to my mother and asked over and over if the letters were being sent. Soon I experienced my first Christmas. And I came to love my new home.

KP: When you left Austria, did you know you might never see your parents again?

CK: They said they would follow me

soon, and as a child, I hoped they would. After a long while, I got a letter from my father, who was in a concentration camp, saying that he was well but he didn't know where Mother was. I found out later that she had been killed, but he hadn't wanted to tell me. My father survived the concentration camp, but we never met again.

Editor's Note: Charlotte Berger Keiderling moved to the U.S. with her husband and their children in 1971. She spent the last six years of her life in Elka Park, New York, where she worked in the school library. She died this past August, at age 89.

Kyla appreciates having known Keiderling and having had the chance to interview her about her childhood. Says Kyla, "I learned how important it is to uncover these fascinating stories that people can tell . . . which are the foundations of history itself." ♦

WRITE ABOUT IT!

What does Kyla Page mean when she says that people's stories "are the foundations of history itself"? Why is Charlotte Keiderling's story important?

EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY CONTEST

Kyla Page, 14, of Elka Park, New York, interviewed Charlotte Keiderling for our 2020 Eyewitness to History contest. Kyla's Q&A won her runner-up honors—and \$50. It's not too late for you to enter our 2021 contest! Go to junior.scholastic.com for contest details and an official entry form.



DEADLINE EXTENDED!

Charlotte Keiderling and Kyla Page in June 2020