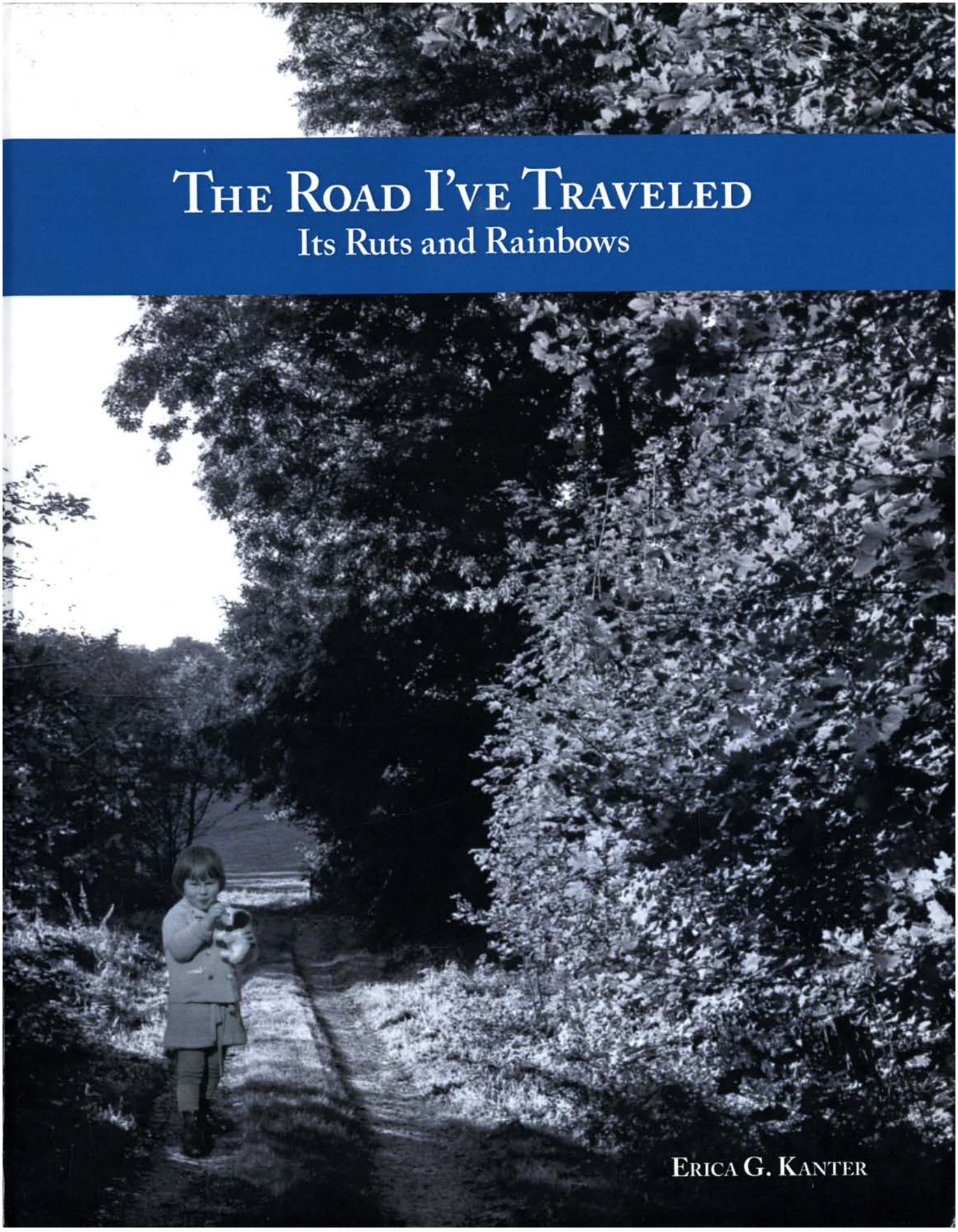
The Road I've Traveled

Its Ruts and Rainbows



Erica G. Kanter

Erica Kanter, Holocaust Survivor, wrote down her memoirs in a book for posterity. These are the two chapters that chronicals her time as a child surviving the horrors during WWII.

CHAPTER III

Life in Germany Begins to Change

1933–1939

Textbooks all document the political changes taking place in Germany in the 1930s, after Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party seized control in 1933. But few of them describe the many ways in which these changes affected and altered the day-to-day lives of ordinary citizens, especially the Jews. Some of these changes took place fairly rapidly in cities such as Berlin and Munich, where anti-Jewish sentiment stirred up by Hitler ran high, but in Stuttgart these changes came about more gradually and somewhat later. As a result, life for my parents changed little at first. Unlike some of our Jewish relatives who lived in parts of Germany where anti-Jewish behavior was more pronounced, my parents did not think of leaving Germany at first. Besides, my mother was not Jewish.

My Extended Family Is Scattered

Unlike my parents, my father's brother, my Uncle Otto Hecht, and his family decided to leave Germany in 1933, when he lost his government research job at the Hamburg Tropical Disease Institute because he was Jewish. He had been doing research on how to eradicate disease-carrying insects from the hold of ships coming into the port of Hamburg. The family traveled first to Palestine (now Israel), where they lived for eight years, and then halfway around the world to Venezuela, and finally settled in Mexico City. There my cousins Rudy and Fritz grew up learning to speak Spanish. My uncle, an entomologist (an expert on insects, especially mosquitoes), became a professor at a university in Mexico City. My cousin Rudy, who became a doctor, is now retired and lives in Madison, Wisconsin, with his wife, Ilse, and has four children and grandchildren. Rudy and Ilse have visited us in Orlando. Cousin Fritz, who speaks several languages but is also mentally impaired, has lived for many years in a special institution in Germany, not far from Stuttgart, where he has been well cared for.

My Aunt Anneliese and my cousins left Germany in 1936. Her husband, my Uncle Hans (Giovanni) Geschmay, had already left Germany and moved to Italy in 1934 because he had factories that manufactured felts for the paper industry in both Germany and Italy. In 1936 my father and my Uncle Otto and my grandparents all traveled to Italy to visit Aunt Anneliese and to celebrate my grandfather's seventieth birthday. It was the last time that my father and his brother and sister were all together. The Geschmays remained in Italy, in hiding from Mussolini during World War II because Jews were also persecuted in Italy. My uncle was hidden by a farmer, who took him on as a farmhand, and my aunt and three cousins—Hannelore (now Anna Laura), Dorothea, and Silvia—were hidden by nuns in a monastery. The felt factories were bombed and destroyed during the war but were later rebuilt, with flourishing branches in Germany, Italy, and the United States. My cousins eventually all married and became Italian citizens, and all still live in Italy. They each have two children. When my Uncle Hans died, my cousin Anna Laura took over management of the felt manufacturing companies. In 1995 she was named a Cavaliere del Lavoro (Knight of Labor), one of only 5 percent of women—and the only Jewish woman—to be so honored. Anna Laura and her granddaughter Elena have visited in Orlando, and we have been to her house in Spinea, outside Venice, more than once.

Because the relatives on my mother's side were not Jewish, their lives were not affected by Hitler's hostilities against the Jews. My Aunt Isa Gayer, who divorced her husband who had become a Nazi, and my mother had a reunion and reconciliation many years later in Germany, a few years before my aunt died. My cousins Gertrud, Franziska, and Mariluise still live in Germany—Gertrud and Mariluise in Schorndorf-Schlichen, near Stuttgart, and Franziska in Memmelsdorf, near Bamberg. Over the years, we have made frequent visits to Schorndorf-Schlichten.

And so, part of my extended family is still German, while the rest eventually claimed citizenship in countries scattered all over the globe.

My Family's Life Begins to Change

When I was very young, I was not aware of how Hitler influenced our lives. I knew the national anthem, "*Deutschland, Deutschland, Über Alles*" ("Germany, Germany, Over All"), and I knew how to do the required Hitler salute in school. But my daily life was not affected very much. Then regulations issued by the Nazis began to restrict our lives. Signs proclaiming "*Juden unerwünscht*" ("Jews not welcome") appeared in many places, and Jews were no longer allowed to use public swimming pools or parks. Before long, a

law was passed saying that Jews could no longer employ female household help younger than 45, and so my parents had to let our housekeepers go. Although they did not want to leave us, they had no choice. (That is probably why we had the nameless older housekeeper who was such a failure.) Jewish lawyers and other professionals were expelled from all official positions, among them the husband of my father's cousin Fritzi, Hugh Stern, who had been a lawyer.

In 1935, German Jews were stripped of their citizenship, which deprived them of rights normally granted to citizens. Jews had to register everything they owned, including real estate, household property, and valuables such as jewelry. Then on October 1, 1938, my father lost his medical license, and Jewish physicians were forbidden to practice medicine, except for treating Jewish patients. And finally, I was no longer allowed to attend school. Oddly enough, my school friends did not turn against me, although associating with a Jewish child must have been considered very dangerous. They all signed the album that I still treasure.

With more and more restrictions on Jews, my father decided a few months before losing his medical license that it was imperative for us to leave Germany. He applied at the American consulate in Stuttgart for an immigration visa to the United States, but the process was lengthy and time-consuming, and visas were strictly limited by quotas. People who wanted to emigrate received a number in the order in which they applied and then had to wait, sometimes years for those wishing to leave Germany, until their number came up. When it came up, they had to undergo thorough physical examinations to prove they were healthy and had to explain to officials at the American consulate their reasons for wanting to leave Germany. They also had to submit documents showing that a relative or some other person in the United States was willing to support them financially if needed. My father was able to get a distant cousin named Schorske, who was an American citizen, to guarantee financial support. Now, all my parents could do was wait and plan how to get us all out of Germany. My mother, who did not qualify for a number issued to Germans because she was born in Czechoslovakia, had received one of the few numbers given to Czechs.

Kristallnacht ("The Night of Broken Glass")

In early November 1938, the Nazis unleashed a massive wave of violence against German Jews. The attack came in retaliation for the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris, on November 7, by a Jewish teenager studying in Paris. His family in Germany, who were Polish Jews, had recently been mistreated by the Nazis. Their property had

been confiscated, and they and other Polish Jews had been forced from their homes and transported to the Polish border. When the Polish government refused to take them back, many of them were kept in camps near the border. Outraged at the injustice done to his family, the teenager took revenge by shooting the German diplomat.

The assassination gave the Nazis an excuse to respond with their own acts of violence, which had actually been planned for some time. On the night of November 9, within hours of the assassination, thousands of synagogues, Jewish businesses, and homes of Jews throughout Germany were damaged or destroyed. This massive attack came to be called *Kristallnacht*, for the great piles of shattered glass from smashed store windows that blanketed streets throughout Germany.

Nazi storm troopers injured and killed many Jews, and for the first time thousands of Jews began to be arrested and to be transported to Nazi concentration camps. Among them was my father, who was arrested and sent to the infamous concentration camp of Dachau. I still remember saying good-bye to him when they came to arrest him. My mother immediately sent my sister by bus to the other side of Stuttgart to warn my great-uncles Hermann and Otto Thalmessinger that they should hide because the Gestapo had come and taken my father away. My mother thought it was safest to send Lisa because no one would suspect a young girl riding alone on a bus of being a messenger.

At that time, release from a concentration camp such as Dachau was still possible, and some prisoners were kept there for only a few weeks. My father spent a month in Dachau before being released. Release was possible only if the prisoner had already applied for a visa to emigrate from Germany and if he had served in the German army during World War I. My father qualified on both counts. A story that I heard many years later was that the police chief in Stuttgart also was instrumental in obtaining my father's release. It seems that my father had helped to save the life of his six-year-old son years earlier when he was his doctor, and the chief never forgot. I don't know if the story is true.

My father never talked about his experience in Dachau, not then or during the rest of his life, and we never asked. (Only his addition to his 1972 autobiography mentions the horrifying experience in some detail.) The only visible evidence I have is a photograph of my father with a shaved head, taken shortly after his release. Weeks later, while waiting for his visa, he also had to undergo surgery for a lingering sinus infection, an aftermath of his imprisonment in Dachau. I still remember bringing him a bunch of violets in the hospital when he was recuperating. He didn't stay in Stuttgart after being released from the hospital but instead left for Switzerland.

The Friends Refugee Committee and the Kindertransport

While my father was still in Dachau, my mother tried desperately to find ways to get Lisa, Ted, and me out of Germany as quickly as possible. She heard of an organization, the Friends Refugee Committee started by the Quakers, whose purpose was to get Jewish children between the ages of 6 and 17 out of Nazi Germany. Through the *Kindertransport* ("Children's Transport"), as it was called, it aimed to rescue 10,000 children and send them to foster homes in England, where they would be safe.

With the help of this organization, my mother succeeded in contacting three English families who volunteered to take us. My sister's English family, the Dickinsons, lived in Buxton, not far from Manchester. My brother's family, the Coxes, lived in Harrow, outside London. My family, the Cornishes, lived in Marple, a small town outside Manchester.

All three foster fathers were professional people—Mr. Dickinson a wool industrialist, Mr. Cox an accountant, and Ronald Cornish a Professor of Engineering at the University of Manchester. All three and their wives had volunteered to accept a refugee child and become foster parents even though they had children of their own. The Dickinsons had three children, the Coxes had a daughter a few years older than Ted, and the Cornishes had twin girls about my age. None of the families knew how long they would have to provide a home and care for us—perhaps a month, a year, or forever. Their selfless generosity and kindness, and that of similar English families, astounds me to this day.

Many years later, my father told me that at first he and my mother thought that they would be allowed to send only one of us out of Germany. They had to choose which of us to send. What a decision for a parent! After much agonizing, they decided they would send Ted because, as the son of a Jewish father, he would have a more difficult time in Nazi Germany. But eventually, there was room for all three of us.

Getting Ready to Leave Germany

By April 1939, Lisa, Ted, and I were ready to be sent by transport train out of Germany. A few months earlier, my mother had hired a teacher who knew English to give me lessons. I remember going to her house for lessons once or twice a week. I recall that she was very friendly and that I enjoyed going to her house, but my strongest recollections are of the wonderful *Plätzle* (cookies) that she always served with hot chocolate after each lesson! She tried valiantly to teach me some English, and I did learn a few phrases, which I sometimes showed off in public. This, of course, was extremely dangerous

because my family could have been severely punished for it. As a nine-year-old, I had no idea what serious consequences could have resulted from my few acquired English phrases. Fortunately, those within earshot apparently paid no attention to the little show-off who liked to talk too much!

For several weeks, my mother's dressmaker made beautiful dresses, many with hand-stitched embroidery and shirring, for me to take to England. My favorite things, including my teddy bear and some of my books and toys, were carefully packed in a trunk, together with a brand-new quilt with tiny flowers all over it. Also packed, together with more new clothes, were several photo albums with pictures of me as a baby and pictures of the family, scenes of Stuttgart and of Kinsberg, and a little address book and a book listing all the family birthdays (filled in for me by Ted in his meticulous handwriting). Also packed was my "Friendship Book" with pictures of my classmates. My gentle and brave mother, at what was no doubt the most heart-wrenching and stressful time in her life, thought only of us and our welfare. She wanted to make sure that we would have familiar things with us in our new surroundings in England to assure us that we were deeply loved by our parents far away. At the age of nine, I never fully comprehended the seriousness of the trip or the reasons for my move. I'm sure that for Lisa and Ted the separation must have been much more traumatic.

I still have the quilt, now very faded, its flowers hidden by a cover made from an old sheet. Guests use it when they lie in the sun on my pool deck in Orlando. My teddy bear resides in a box in my attic, looking very old and greatly in need of going up to St. Nicholas's workshop again! My bookcase still holds the children's book about the mischievous angel and his two charges, given to me by Ruth, as well as a favorite book about six teddy bears, whose black and white illustrations I had carefully filled in with water colors. Another favorite book, which unfortunately got lost, was *Max und Moritz*, about the antics of two boys all written in rhyme. Another was about *Strubel Peter* ("Peter with the Messy Hair"), a boy who refused to have his hair cut, grew enormously long fingernails, and never looked where he was going (and consequently fell into a lake!). I even had a handkerchief with pictures of Peter's silly habits. I still have the little address book, the birthday book, and the "Friendship Book." The treasured photo albums have provided many of the pictures in this memoir.

Our Escape to England

In April 1939, Lisa, Ted, and I left on the Kindertransport train out of Germany. Though I remember some of the trip, I don't recall saying good-bye to my mother at

the railroad station. I read somewhere recently that the Friends Refugee Committee advised parents not to go on the platform but to say their farewells outside the station to avoid a public commotion in the station. Perhaps that was so in some places, but Ted does remember that our mother came to the platform to say good-bye. I think Lisa and Ted may have gathered from my mother's reaction that she was afraid we might never see her again, but I don't recall that I understood the significance of the sad good-bye.

On the train to Holland, I was required to play my violin to prove that I really knew how to play. The Nazis wanted to make sure that refugee children were not carrying valuable musical instruments out of Germany to be sold later for needed cash by their families. I still remember the tune I confidently played for the suspicious guards: "*Ach du Lieber Augustin*," a well-known children's song. I can still sing it! (When Ted left, he did bring out a valuable old gold piece that had belonged to my great-grandfather and that my mother had hidden inside a scooped-out bar of soap in Ted's trunk.)

After crossing the English Channel, we arrived at the large railroad station in London, England, a whole trainload of refugee children. There our English families were waiting for us. Lisa and I said good-bye to Ted, whose family took him to Harrow. Lisa departed for Buxton with her new family, and the Cornishes picked me up and took me to what would be my new home in Marple. On that first afternoon in Marple, they celebrated my arrival with a festive afternoon "high tea." Much to my delight, my English foster mother spoke fluent German! However, when bedtime came, the "foster mother" departed, and a lady who spoke no German took over. What I soon learned was that the German-speaking lady was actually the German teacher from the school in Manchester, whom the Cornishes had invited for the day to make my transition less traumatic. From then on, with just a smattering of English phrases to help me, I was on my own!

Kristallnacht, 1938

Signs like this were posted in parks, theaters, etc., saying "Jews are not welcome here."

One of many synagogues set on fire or bombed during Kristallnacht

The broken shop window of a business owned by Jews, one of thousands destroyed on Kristallnacht

CHAPTER IV

My Life in England as a Refugee Child

1939–1940

My New Family—The Cornishes

I don't recall that my lack of English gave me much trouble in communicating with the Cornishes. From the beginning, I was made to feel that I was a full-fledged member of my new family. "Uncle" Cornish was tall and thin and very jolly, with ruddy cheeks and a wonderful sense of humor. He commuted each weekday to Manchester, where he taught at the University of Manchester. He soon gave me a new nickname—Pikelet ("Little Hecht"/"Little Pike")—which has remained my English nickname to this day. "Auntie" Edith was tiny and quite shy and quiet but firm in her convictions when challenged. I took to both of them immediately. The twins, Kathleen and Joyce, who were only six months older than I, quickly made me feel welcome. They, too, were opposites in temperament—Kathleen was self-assured and outgoing, and Joyce was a bit more reticent and fairly quiet. But I also liked them both right away.

The Cornishes' house—"Manesty" on Oakdene Road—was a lovely old two-story stone house with a long garden, where "Auntie" grew flowers and vegetables. The twins generously gave up one of their bedrooms and bunked with each other so that I could have a bedroom by myself. The house was within walking distance to the center of Marple, where the twins and I took the train to our school in Manchester, the Manchester High School for Girls (an elementary school). I started school within a day or two of my arrival and caught on to English (with a British accent!) very quickly—even without *Plätzle*! We wore school uniforms, which for me was an exciting novelty. In the winter, we wore black tunics with yellow shirts and black blazers trimmed with yellow. In warmer weather, we wore checkered cotton dresses in a choice of colors—

yellow and white, green and white, red and white, or blue and white. What color to wear was always a topic of much discussion.

I liked school and particularly my teacher, Miss Andrew. Everyone accepted me easily without any fuss at all, and within two weeks of my arrival, I was in the class performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (I think I had a non-speaking part!) The train trip each school day was an adventure for me, and I remember that we brought our lunch, in which "Auntie" always included a Cadbury candy bar.

Keeping in Touch

I wrote home regularly and also received letters from my parents, which was still possible in the summer of 1939. In June, my father left Germany and fled to Switzerland on a temporary visa, obtained by my mother through connections at the Swiss consulate in Stuttgart, where my father had been the vice-consul's physician. In Switzerland, he stayed with his cousin, Fritz Nathan, for several weeks. My mother could not get an exit permit to follow him and stayed in Stuttgart to pack up and save our belongings for shipment to the United States.

Like other families who were leaving Germany, she arranged to have the contents of our three-story house—furniture, paintings, bedding, household goods, etc.—packed in a "lift," a huge wooden crate to be shipped to the United States. Little did she know that nothing would ever be sent. It was all eventually confiscated by the Nazis. All jewelry and other valuables were to be turned over to the government. I still marvel how my mother mustered up the courage to save the jewelry, which she had inherited from her mother and grandmother, as well as her valuable silverware. The jewelry consisted of antique diamond bracelets and brooches, gold bracelets with gems, diamond earrings, and a strand of seed pearls. Attempting to send such valuables out of Germany would have had severe consequences, but my mother was determined to find a way to save them. She asked Emma Göring, who had been a friend of my parents for many years, to help. Emma was a close relative of Hermann Göring, one of Hitler's top Nazi officials. Unlike her relative, Emma had never joined the Nazi party and had been very outspoken in expressing her anti-Nazi opinions. However, because she was related to Hermann Göring, she was never arrested or imprisoned. She agreed to help my mother by burying the jewelry and silver in her garden.

During the summer of 1939, my mother periodically sent me a little package, which I eagerly looked forward to and treasured. When the cherries on our big Bing cherry tree in Stuttgart ripened, she sent me a box of cherries, each carefully wrapped to avoid

being crushed in the mail. Those cherries were my connection to home and became my consolation on the only occasion on which "Uncle" punished me by sending me to my room. I considered the punishment totally unwarranted because the event that caused it had seemed to me simply a bit of fun. It occurred one evening during bath time.

The upstairs bathroom had a large cabinet that housed the water heater, and it was a cozy place to dry oneself, especially since the bathroom was generally quite chilly, as were most of the rooms. Central heating was rare in those days, and the Marple house was heated mainly by fireplaces in some of the rooms. It was my turn to take a bath first, to be followed by each of the twins. While I was in the cabinet drying myself, I could hear one of the twins coming up the stairs to take her bath. Thinking that it was Kathleen, I thought it would be great fun to close the cabinet door a bit and then shout "Boooo!" when Kathleen entered the bathroom. Alas, I had guessed incorrectly. It was Joyce who entered and she, being the more nervous twin, shrieked in horror at my mischievous "Boooo!" Tears from Joyce erupted, followed not long afterward by a lecture from "Uncle" and dismissal to my room.

To this day I can still remember sitting on my bed, on my beautiful quilt, all alone and sulking about the unfairness of the punishment for what had seemed like so much fun. I carefully opened my mother's box of cherries and slowly ate cherry after cherry, muttering to myself, "And none of you shall have a single one of my cherries! They are all mine!" Years later, on a trip to England with Milt for "Auntie's" 80th birthday, I laughingly reminded "Uncle" of this little incident. He was most amused but had no recollection of what for me was a world-shaking, unforgettable event.

New Experiences

As a member of the family, I had certain responsibilities. I remember helping "Auntie" in the kitchen when she prepared what became my favorite meal of the day, "high tea," something we didn't have in Germany. When we visited England many years later, she reminded me that I always volunteered to help, proclaiming, "Auntie, I will make!" The "making" consisted of chopping into tiny cubes three different colors of Jell-O (something I had never had before) and then combining them for a colorful dessert. I always thought the Jell-O looked like a bowlful of jewels. "Auntie" usually served tiny cucumber sandwiches at "high tea," and I can still see her standing a whole loaf of white bread on its end, buttering the square top, arranging thin slices of cucumber on top, and then carefully slicing the top to make an amazingly thin open sandwich.

And, of course, there was tea. I had had tea in Germany, but it was served rather weak, not like the strong black tea in England. "Auntie" was always concerned because I wouldn't use milk in my tea, just sugar. She finally wrote to my mother asking if that was alright. Not knowing that English tea was almost pitch black, my mother assured her that I always drank it that way. To this day, I don't take milk in my tea, but my preference is English Breakfast tea—brewed German style!

Breakfasts were "Uncle's" specialty. He cooked porridge (oatmeal) the night before and let it sit overnight. The thick lumpy porridge was not my favorite! I also had a hard time getting used to kippered herring, but I did love scones and crumpets. I remember the crumpets dripping in butter and sometimes served with "lemon curd," which was homemade. I remember squeezing lemons for "Auntie" while she beat several egg yolks with sugar to be cooked to make curd.

On weekends we often had mutton, which I was not very fond of, but I did like the leftover mutton chopped like hamburger and made into Shepherds Pie, with mashed potatoes on top. I still have what was later a wedding present from the Cornishes—an antique spoon warmer, a pewter container shaped like a seashell into which one poured hot water to heat the metal spoon so it could cut through the fat on mutton gravy. The antique contraption has been on display in our bookcase for many years, and guests have never succeeded in guessing its intended use.

In Marple, I also had my first experience with a dentist. I suppose I had one in Germany, too, but only remember the one in England. Perhaps I didn't brush my teeth as regularly as I had in the past and as a result got a couple of cavities. Dentistry in those days was a bit more complicated, and I remember having a clumsy rubber sheet stretched over my teeth when he filled my front teeth. And we didn't get sugar-free gum or ice cream as a reward, the way Laura and Susan did when they were little!

Summer Vacation in Wales

The summer after I arrived, the Cornishes decided to spend a few weeks on a camping trip in St. David's, on the southwestern tip of Wales. We packed three tents—one for "Auntie" and "Uncle" to sleep in, one for the twins and me, and one as a "cooking tent." The Cornishes' dog, Spot, a wonderful scruffy white mutt, came along, too.

The town of St. David's had a beautiful cathedral in honor of St. David, the patron saint of Wales. We camped in a farmer's field outside of town near the cliffs that overlooked the ocean. We sometimes walked into town to buy tiny pies called Lyons Pies packaged in paper bags for dessert. We slept on straw covered with a sheet and prepared

meals in the "cooking tent" on a camp stove—that is, until "Uncle" cooked kippers one morning and set the tent on fire! From then on, all cooking was done outdoors.

The farmer, who lived nearby, had horses on which one of the farmhands gave us rides occasionally, and we sometimes helped with the haying. The hay was brought to the barn on a wooden wagon pulled by oxen. We also swam in the ocean and spent the days playing games, Cat's Cradle being one of our favorites. I continued to write letters and postcards home to my mother, which was still possible that summer.

In the summer of 1939, I also went on a trip with friends of the Cornishes to visit my best friend from Germany, Ursl Mayer. I don't know where she lived, but I have pictures of us together on a beach somewhere in England and also playing recorders, which we had learned in school in Germany. I don't know what became of Ursl or whether she stayed in England. How wonderful it would be to meet her again!

My memories of that summer are very happy ones. Little did we know that before very long, England and the rest of Europe would be plunged into a terrible war.

World War II Begins

We went back to school in the fall, again commuting to Manchester. Early in September, my father was able to leave Switzerland and come to England. He lived in a boarding house in Harrow, outside London, where my brother, Ted, was also living with his English family, the Coxes.

By then, the political situation in Europe had become more and more threatening. A week after my father arrived in Harrow, life changed again, dramatically. Germany had annexed Austria in 1938, and in September 1939 Hitler without provocation invaded Poland. England and France, as Poland's allies, declared war on Germany, and World War II began. Hitler soon began his *Blitzkrieg* ("Lightning War") by invading France and then Holland and joined forces with the Italian dictator Mussolini. Hitler's aim was to conquer all of Europe, including England.

As England prepared to fight, my life changed once more. In Marple, we prepared the house for blackouts to prevent lights from shining at night, which would guide German bombers that were sure to come since we lived not far from Manchester, an industrial city. My father in Harrow also helped to prepare the boarding house where he lived by helping his landlady hang blackout curtains. A family story, repeated many times, tells how my father—whose English was not yet perfect—told his landlady that what she needed to hang the blackout curtains was a "security needle." She was very

puzzled until she realized that he had translated literally from German and really meant a "safety pin"!

The Cornishes had a radio, and we listened regularly to news of the war. England's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, spoke eloquently to the people of Great Britain, encouraging them to keep up their courage. Princess Elizabeth (now Queen Elizabeth) and her sister, Princess Margaret Rose, also spoke regularly on the BBC to the children of Great Britain to boost our morale and to remind us to be brave. The twins and I continued to attend school in Manchester, but we traveled to school with gas masks in canvas bags slung over our shoulders and learned what to do in case air raid sirens announced an attack. Before long, the Germans began to bomb Manchester, and it was decided that it was too dangerous for us to continue to go to school there. We were sent to the countryside, where we would be safe. Many children all over England were evacuated and sent to the countryside for safety.

Another New Home—in Cheadle Hulme

The twins were sent to a boarding school, and I was sent to Cheadle Hulme, a small town south of Manchester. There our school from Manchester had another school—the Manchester Warehousemen and Clerks' Orphan School—that I could attend as a day student. I was sent to live with another English family, the Emersons. Mrs. Emerson was a widow and had a daughter who owned a beauty parlor in Cheadle Hulme. The Emersons were very kind to me, and I was very happy with them and in my new school, especially since my favorite teacher, Miss Andrew, had also been sent there to teach.

During my stay with the Emersons, I went to my first "school dance." Mrs. Emerson made me a beautiful dress, royal blue and brown, with little flowers around the neck, and I had my hair styled by her daughter in the beauty parlor. I thought I was very special! (During the past seventy years, I've had my hair done only one other time—for a family wedding. Laura and Susan were then about nine and seven, and Grandma Kanter had come up from Florida for the occasion. So, off I went to the beauty parlor. Upon my return, Milt, Grandma, and the girls were all waiting at the front door to see the results. As I entered, everyone looked amused and Milt shook his head, pointed to the bathroom, and said very firmly, "Shower!" It was my last attempt at being a beauty-parlor creation!)

During the school year, I went home to Marple during school breaks, including Christmas. That holiday was nothing like the Christmases we had celebrated in Stuttgart, although the Cornishes very kindly also celebrated on Christmas Eve because

they knew that was what I was used to. My only memory is of having plum pudding for the first time.

I enjoyed my weeks at Cheadle Hulme School and was delighted that I again had Miss Andrew as one of my teachers. Judging from my report cards in 1939 and in the spring of 1940, I had an enormous number of subjects (16 in all!), ranging from Religion to Gymnastics! My overall progress was ranked "excellent" and my conduct "very good." Jillian will be amused to learn that my grade in Gymnastics was "very good—Erika is keen and should do very well"! I also got an A in Violin and "Very good indeed" in Needlework and Arithmetic. In comments about my subjects in English, which consisted of Reading, Writing, Dictation, Composition, Poetry, and Grammar, Miss Andrew wrote, "Erika has worked enthusiastically and perseveringly at her English with excellent results. She has powers of appreciation and a happy way of expressing herself. It has been a delight to teach her." No wonder I liked Miss Andrew!

In March, while I was at Cheadle Hulme, my father was informed that we had received permission from the American consulate in London to leave for the United States. He succeeded in booking passage for us in May on the *Brittanic*, one of the boats of the Cunard White Star Line, leaving from Liverpool. Once again, my belongings were packed, and in May I said farewell to "Auntie" and "Uncle" and the twins. They have remained my "second family" for almost seventy years, and I can never thank them enough for all that they did for me during that traumatic time. Kathleen and Joyce, with whom I correspond regularly and with whom I exchange Christmas presents and pictures of our grandchildren, will always remain "my foster sisters."