

MIRIAM GERBER  
RG-50.150.0009

Miriam Gerber was. Born in Worms, Germany in 1922. She speaks of having a Nazi teacher around 1933-1935 who made life miserable for her and let other kids hit and kick her. Her father then helped start a Jewish school. She did have Jewish friends, but felt terrible when her best friend who was not Jewish deserted her. People started talking about emigration, but at first her father, who was in wholesale and real estate businesses, didn't want to leave but later changed his mind. Her parents were going to send her on a kinder transport to England, but this didn't happen.

Miriam spent a few weeks in. Frankfurt at a school for seamstresses, but then came home. Her father was in hiding during Kristallnacht. He began trying to get visas out of Germany to either US or South American. In October 1940 the family was told to pack and put on a train and sent to the border between occupied and unoccupied France. Her parents and grandparents were with her. Then they ended up in Gers, where they slept in bare barracks. There were about 60 people in a room, they had to stand in line for the latrine and were always hungry. There was a lot of dysentery.

Eventually with help from American relatives the family was able to go to Sosua, Dominican Republic. The grandparents stayed in Europe and spent the war in a cloister. To get to DR they went through Lisbon to New York, where they weren't allowed to leave Ellis Island, so their relatives visited them there before they left for Sosua. Trujillo wanted Jews to come to the area to farm... he was the only one who had responded positively to the Evian conference. In Sosua they worked with cattle and dairy farming; almost everyone there were German speakers. In Sosua, Miriam worked as a nurse in a dental office and in a kindergarten.

After the war she and her younger sister came to New York; her sister was 17 at the time. Her parents came after six months. Miriam got a job as a dental assistant through the New York Times. She was very depressed and unhappy and after she followed her non-Jewish German boyfriend to San Francisco, she ended up in a psychiatric hospital there.

Miriam was married twice; first to an American Jew and then. To her husband, Jack. She and Jack each had a son. In 1972 she went back to Worms because a group of survivors wanted to commemorate a former teacher, Hada Hotsfer. She had gone through Theresienstadt and her book ended up in Yad Vashem. She also tried to stop the synagogue in Worms from being burned... The synagogue was over 900 years old and Rashi had taught there.