https://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Interviewee: <u>BLUMENTHAL</u>, Caroline (Carla) Date: February 5, 1981

Interviewer: Fred Stamm

Audio tapes: 2 English Transcript: 1 vol. (unpaged) English

Restrictions: None

SUMMARY

Caroline¹ Blumenthal, nee Schoenfeld, was born in Cologne, Germany in September 1900. Her family lived peacefully with the non-Jewish population. She went to public school until 1914, then learned office work at a trade school. She married in 1920, and her daughter, Ruth, was born in 1924. Caroline divorced in 1931. She describes the increase of antisemitism beginning in 1931. Caroline ran her own dairy store until SS boycott restrictions forced her to close in 1933. She then worked as a typist for the Federal Association of Jewish War Veterans, part of the *Judische Gemeinde* in Cologne until the building was destroyed on *Kristallnacht*. Caroline describes the destruction during *Kristallnacht*, November 10, 1938, when synagogues and Jewish stores were burned and Jews were put into concentration camps for weeks.

In 1939 Caroline remarried a decorated WWI veteran. She describes the deteriorating conditions in Cologne during the bombing by the British and her family's deportation to Theresienstadt, along with 50 other families from Cologne, in September 1942. She gives details of her work in the camp bakery, the deplorable conditions in Theresienstadt, as well as descriptions of the deportations from there to Auschwitz. Caroline also describes the 1944 visit by the International Red Cross as a total farce: the camp was temporarily cleaned, supplied with food and music was added. Her daughter, Ruth, was married secretly in Theresienstadt, but her new husband was deported. Ruth was later deported to Auschwitz also where she did harsh factory work and later to Mauthausen from which she was liberated by the Americans.

After Theresienstadt was liberated by the Soviets in May 1945, Caroline continued to work in the bakery for about five months. She describes the emaciated survivors of concentration camps coming to Theresienstadt and the exemplary help provided to them by Russian doctors and nurses. She also mentions the Russian soldiers raping the younger women in the camp. She and her husband spent nine months at Deggendorf, an all Jewish Displaced Persons camp, then went to Funkkaserne, a transit station near Munich, and then to Bremen. Caroline and her husband emigrated from Bremen to the United States on June 18, 1946.

¹Mrs. Blumenthal signed her Release Form as Caroline (Carla) Blumenthal. Interviewer addresses her as Carla.

https://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection

Interviewee: <u>BLUMENTHAL</u>, Caroline (Carla) Date: February 5, 1981

SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War, 1939-1945 - Personal narrative – Jewish Cologne, Germany
Anti-Jewish laws
Kristallnacht
Deportation from Germany
Concentration camp – Theresienstadt
1944 visit by the International Red Cross - farce
Concentration camps - Liberation
Rape by Russian soldiers