

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Doughty, Audrey

Date of interview: 7/29/1992

Summary: (Deceased). Audrey Doughty was born in San Diego, California in 1921. Her mother died when she was three. Her father was a naval officer and a member of the diplomatic core. When he was stationed in Berlin in 1938 she and her grandmother went with him. Audrey was seventeen. She transferred from studying at Stanford University to study at the University of Berlin, where she learned passable German.

Audrey was in Berlin during Kristallnacht and took photos afterward. She also made a journal entry describing that night, available in her file. Audrey says apart from Kristallnacht she had little notion of what was really happening in Germany, though she was aware of both anti-Semitic and anti-American sentiment from the Germans. She recalls that soon after arriving in Berlin, she and her father were invited to review the troops with Nazi officials. Audrey sat in the stands three feet from Adolf Hitler, watching endless waves of troops pass underneath. She and her grandmother took a tour of Germany and neighboring countries in 1939.

When she was eighteen, Audrey was offered a position in the American consulate through her father's connections. Her duties essentially consisted of convincing refugees applying for visas to leave the country despite the hopelessly small chance that they would be allowed into another country in the near future. When speaking to her supervisor years later, she discovered she was known around the office as Hitler's greatest threat, and was on Hitler's reviewing list.

In 1940, after the invasion of Poland, the three of them were evacuated to Copenhagen, Denmark. After the war ended, Audrey returned to the U.S. to finish her studies. After graduating from Stanford University she worked as a war correspondent in Honolulu and then went to work for the San Francisco Chronicle. She followed this with a stint in the Office of War Information and then worked as an Associated Press correspondent in China. She eventually left journalism behind and pursued a career as a social worker until becoming the director of the International Institute in San Francisco from 1975 to 1983, providing help to internationals. She then spent 2 1/2 years as director of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. After resigning this position, she started up and directed unpaid for three years AIDS Benefits Councilors. Afterward she directed, (also unpaid), AIDS Indigent Direct Services and at the time of the interview was planning to step down soon and concentrate on writing a book about her family's history, a personal hobby. Audrey also did numerous interviews regarding her wartime experiences and sent editorials on occasion to SF papers warning about possible fascist trends in American society. Audrey had not returned to Germany

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at the time of the interview and admitted to a severe dislike of the German people, intolerance she did not approve of but could not seem to get over. A number of pictures and artifacts relating to her experiences are shown at the close of the interview.