

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

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

RG-50.477*0546

Name of Interviewee: Angress, Dina

Date of Interview: 2/27/1990

Dina Angress was born Dina Dassberg on October 12, 1928 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands (Holland). Dina and her two younger sisters were raised in an Orthodox Jewish family. In 1939 Dina's father was called to the front line to serve as a medic. Around October 1941, the Jews were forced to relocate to the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam. Dina and her mother baked fish cakes for the Jews who had been imprisoned; once this became known they were forced into hiding. After the war, Dina was reunited with her family. For a time, Dina worked in a home for children whose parents had been murdered in concentration camps; she also spent some time obtaining her certification to become a maternity nurse. Dina married in 1947 and in 1948, she and her husband moved to the United States.

Summary Version 2

Name of interviewee: Angress, Dina

Date of interview: 5/27/1990

Summary: Dina Angress was born Dina Dassberg on 10/12/28 in Amsterdam, Holland. Her father, Isaac Dassberg, was an at-home physician who tended to many of the Jews that lived in their Jewish enclave or ghetto, while her mother, Bertha Nystad, stayed at home. Dina had two younger sisters: Lea, who was two years younger, and Roseanne (?), who was five years younger. Dina and her sisters were raised very sheltered from the political happenings in their world. They were an orthodox Jewish family. Due to Dina's father's profession, their family was fairly well known and respected in the surrounding area.

Dina's sister Lea, suffered from intense rheumatoid arthritis, which forced the family to vacation in Switzerland in 1939. The mountain air and elevation there helped with Lea's ailment. Due to mobilization of the Dutch army in 1939, Isaac was called to the front line to serve as a medic, and so Dina, her younger sister, and mother moved back to Holland with Isaac leaving Lea behind in Switzerland for the remainder of the war.

In 1940, Dina's mother got word of ships that were enlisting Jewish mothers and daughters to go to America. However, the women all decided to stay behind and wait for Isaac. Therefore, Dina continued going to her secular school, which had primarily all Jewish students. She remembers very little about the political state of affairs or the concentration camps, but did notice that the number of students dwindled as time progressed. Dina does remember that the German Nazis would find out if a family were Jewish or not, based on the indication on the telephone statement. At first, Dina recalls wearing the yellow Star of David proudly as a testament to her Jewish faith.

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

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

On 10/13/41, Dina entered 7th grade at thirteen-years-old, where she met her future husband who at the time was her boyfriend. Dina also mentions having gone to the same school as Anne Frank. She recalls that around this same time all the remaining Jews were forced to relocate to the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam, where Dina's family already lived. She does not recall ever having a problem with having enough food. However, Dina did feel something was wrong when she received word that their neighbors had just been notified that their son had been recently killed.

On 9/29/43 (or 1942?), Dina remembers the last of the largest raids in Amsterdam that rallied up all of the remaining Jews in the area. Dina's father was the only remaining doctor who circumcised Jewish boys and so he was exempt from the concentration camp round up. Thereafter, Isaac would always go out during routine round ups and approach fleeing Jews and tell them to fake a gall bladder attack or a medical emergency in order to save them. Dina called to mind an instance, where faking that her sister's chicken pox was actually small pox kept the Nazi soldiers from taking them all away to the concentration camps. Dina was also given instructions to fake polio if she were ever in danger of being caught. Despite being surrounded by so many fleeing Jews and Jews in hiding, Dina does not recall ever seeing brutality towards anyone throughout this time.

For some time afterwards, Dina, along with her mother and sister, baked fish cakes for the Jews in the concentration camps. It was in doing this that word got out of their baking and they were forced into hiding. The family split up into different areas of the town with different families. Dina's last name was changed to Capanters (?). She stayed in a temporary home for six weeks, where she suffered from severe headaches, which she feels was mentally stimulated because of her constant thoughts that she should act as if she had polio. After six weeks, Dina was finally taken to the Nauta family in Utrecht, which consisted of a doctor originally named Wallen, his wife Elie, and their baby daughter Tjalda. It was in this family that Dina posed as the maid. Elie taught Dina how to clean the house, cook, spin wool, and other female tasks. In an emergency, she hid between the floor of the second floor and the ceiling of the first floor. She does recall that above them lived a woman with a "good" German man. Dina also remembers that the curfew for Jews was 8 pm, but this man was allowed to come in much later because he was German. This caused Dina much stress at the thought of being caught.

As time progressed, Dina first maintained contact with her parents via mail and then eventually began visiting them. She remembers how she grew more distant from the religious aspect of Judaism, however feels that she was and still is very much Jewish in culture. In 1944, Dina spoke of how many Jews thought that the war was over with the invasion of France and Normandy, so that when the real liberation date came about, no one believed it.

After the war, Dina reunited with her family and they started their lives over again. They rented and eventually bought the home of a friend of Isaac. There her father also started up his practice again. She tells of how her home became the center for all friends and relatives that returned from the concentration camps and did not know the whereabouts of their family. For a time, Dina worked in a

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

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

home for children whose parents did not survive the concentration camps. She also spent some time obtaining her certification to become a maternity nurse.

In December 1946, Dina became engaged to her husband and in spring 1947 wanted to follow him to the United States. However, her mother would not let her marry. He was a non-Orthodox German Jew and she did not like that. Eventually, after ten months, Dina's husband returned from the United States with a high school diploma and news of a stable job. Finally in December 1947, they were married and in 1948, together they moved to the United States.

In 1983, Dina obtained her master's degree from San Francisco State University after getting her bachelor's degree from the University of San Francisco. Her thesis was on adoption and, since her involvement with the children's home, has always been interested in social work, which she does now. Dina is currently divorced and has six children with her youngest child being adopted. Dina's mother died of natural causes in 1976 and so only her father and two sisters live in Jerusalem, Israel.

To this day, Dina admits to having mixed feelings towards Germans. She teaches other students that it is important to remember and know that what happened to the Jews and many others in the Holocaust can happen again.