

## Susan Warsinger (Hilsenrath)



### Born May 27, 1929, in Bad Kreuznach, Germany

The Hilsenraths lived in Bad Kreuznach, a city in western Germany with a Jewish community that dated back to the 13th century. Susan was the eldest of three children. Her father owned a thriving linen store, and her mother took care of Susan and her two brothers.

1933–39: After the Nazis came to power, the Hilsenraths, like other Jewish families, began to feel the effects of increased antisemitism. Susan was forced to leave the public school, along with the other Jewish children. Even walking on the streets could be dangerous because the neighborhood children often threw rocks at her. Susan's father had to close his business and sell fruit door-to-door to support his family. On November 9–10, 1938—Kristallnacht ("The Night of Broken Glass")—Nazi thugs smashed the windows and furnishings of the Hilsenrath home. Months later, Susan and her brother Joseph were smuggled into France.

1940–45: In May 1940, the German army invaded France. Susan and Joseph were evacuated from a children's home in Paris to Versailles, where they were temporarily housed in Louis XIV's magnificent palace. Soon German soldiers arrived and the children fled with their guardians to the unoccupied part of the country controlled directly by the Vichy government. With the help of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Susan and Joseph received permission to immigrate to the United States. After crossing the Pyrenees into Spain, the two sailed from Lisbon, Portugal, and arrived in New York in September 1941.

Susan and Joseph were reunited with their parents and younger brother in the United States. They settled in Washington, D.C.

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