

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Helen Koser

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember Oral History project

Interview # VR2-A-L-2011-034

Helen Koser, a survivor of the German's blitz on Birmingham, England who later married an American soldier after the war, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: August 2, 2011 Location: Home of Don & Ann Lewis in Dixon, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:00 / 1.0 hrs

Interview being
processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 8/5/2011.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Helen Koser, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-A-L-2011-034

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Helen (Laugher) Koser was born on October 30th, 1921 in Birmingham, England, the daughter of a British officer and WW I veteran who died when Helen was three years old. Helen grew up with her mother and grandfather, and attended the St. Augustine Primary School, a Catholic school, until age 14. After two years of high school, she worked for a while, then returned to school to work toward a nursing degree. Helen discussed the mood in England as war approached, and her memories about Birmingham being bombed during the Battle of Britain, and the V-1 and V-2 attacks on England after that.

In 1944 she met John Hambley, who was convalescing in Birmingham, following an air raid. The two dated until John returned to the war in France, and John proposed to her in a letter while at the front. John hoped to return to England to marry Helen after the war, but was shipped home to the United States instead. Helen finally flew to New York City in January of 1947, then took the train to Chicago, where she met John and his brothers. They drove to the small farm near Polo, Illinois, and were married two weeks later. Helen discussed her adjustment to life in America, and her life in Dixon.

Subject Headings/Key Words: growing up in Birmingham, England; St. Augustine Primary School; German bombing of Birmingham, England during WW II; English war brides; American immigrant from England; adjusting to life in the United States; becoming a U.S. citizen

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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