



Sir Nicholas Winton, a young stockbroker in London, was altruistic and courageous in the early 1900s as he helped many children to escape the coming Holocaust. Even though the punishment for helping someone was instant death, to the helper and his or her whole family, virtually no one knows of the astonishing individuals, groups, villages and one entire country who saved hundreds of thousands of persecuted people.

Nicholas Winton represents just one of those stories.

Never telling his wife what he did, for over fifty years after the war, Winton was the exception as the violence against the Jewish community inspired him to organize and rescue children from the Nazis during the time of the Holocaust. His altruistic efforts also allowed him to see thousands of descendants of those whose lives he had saved.

Winton's altruistic efforts in 1938-1939 began when he started a rescue organization that brought approximately 669 children, mostly Jewish, from Czechoslovakia to safety in Great Britain before the outbreak of World War II. During this same year, he met and traveled with Martin Blake, a friend and instructional master at the Westminster School in London, as an associate of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia.

It was during this visit that he met Doreen Wariner, a friend of Blake, who arranged for Winton to visit refugee camps. This exposed him to the violence against the Jewish community in Germany and Austria during the Kristallnacht riots in November of 1938.

After hearing of the efforts of Jewish agencies in Britain to rescue over 10,000 German and Austrian Jewish children, on the so-called Kindertransport, Winton began a similar rescue operation for children imperiled by the impending German dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Winton also used the name of the British Committee for Refugees Czechoslovakia to organize and accept applications from parents seeking a safe haven for their children.

The altruistic efforts continued in London where Winton raised money to fund the transport of children and the 50-pound per child guarantee (demanded by the British government) to fund a child's departure to Britain. He also found British families willing to care for the refugees, saving them from almost certain death.

A total of eight trains was organized and left Prague, and other forms of transport were setup from Vienna to enhance his efforts to save children. All of these efforts were in addition to Winton working at his job during the day, while late afternoons and evenings were devoted to his rescue efforts. In addition, Winton battled bureaucracy at both ends, and persuaded British custom officials to allow all the children in despite incomplete documentation.

Although the rescue activities ceased when Germany invaded Poland and Britain declared war on Germany in early September 1939, Winton did not stop. He went on to create a scrapbook of his efforts that remained virtually unknown until 1988. At this time, his wife found the scrapbook and became aware of all the children he had helped.

Recognition of Winton's humanitarian efforts include being honored by the former president of the State of Israel. He was made an honorary citizen of Prague, in the independent Czech Republic, and received a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his services to humanity (along with a host of other awards) before his death in 2015.

#### **Footnotes:**

1) Nick and Barbara Winton, Sir Nicholas Winton, Nicholas Winton Home Page, May/21/2016, May/07/2016, <http://www.nicholaswinton.com/>

2) Holocaust Memorial Museum, Nicholas Winton and the rescue of children from Czechoslovakia, Holocaust Encyclopedia, Jan/29/2016, May/07/2016, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007780>

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Altruism-Stockbroker-Sir-Nicholas-Winton-and-the-Children-of-the-Holocaust>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Altruism-Stockbroker-Sir-Nicholas-Winton-and-the-Children-of-the-Holocaust>

## Questions 2 Ponder

### Nicholas Winton - Why Do We Concentrate on the Evils of History?

Nicholas Winton risked much, including his life, to help children who were at risk before World War II erupted. His efforts saved hundreds of children from the Holocaust.

Have you ever heard of him?

Why do people concentrate on the evils of history and tend to forget (or ignore) the good?

What can we learn from the efforts of Nicholas Winton? Would his type of courage - and actions - apply to any current events that concern people today? What are some examples?

### Nicholas Winton - What Makes a Person Brave-Enough to Help?

Nicholas Winton, a British stockbroker working in Prague before the outbreak of World War II, became very concerned about children who would be at-risk during the coming war. He decided to do something to help, then kept quiet about his heroism until his wife found an old scrapbook decades later.

Does it make a difference, to you, if someone heroic keeps quiet about that heroism? Explain your answer.

What would it be like to know that you personally saved the lives of hundreds of at-risk children? Could you keep quiet about that?

Are there opportunities that exist to help even one person that you know? How do you think your help would be received by that individual?

Would you consider Nicholas Winton to be a leader even though he did not possess political power? Why, or why not?

What occasions exist in the world today which call for brave leaders? How would you advise those political leaders if they asked you to select just one area of concern where people needed help?

Many of the children (now adults) whom Winton helped are unaware of his efforts. How would you go-about finding those people? Do you think that a movie about what happened, like "The Power of Good," would assist efforts to locate them?

If someone had helped you to escape danger, when you were very young, would you want to know about that person when you were older?

## Media Stream



### Sir Nicholas Winton

BBC,

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Sir-Nicholas-Winton>