

# Lois's Story

Abridged by Ed Edelson

In 1937, Lois Lindsay was ten years old. She lived in a section of Southbury, Connecticut called South Britain. Her father was the Reverend Lindsay, who was the Minister at the South Britain Congregational Church. Lois knew that her father was an important person in their community.

On Tuesday, November 16th, two men came to see her father at their home. They were dressed in military uniforms and came in a large, fancy black car that was not the type commonly seen in rural Connecticut.

After they left, Lois could see that her father was worried. When she asked him why, he started to answer. Then took her by the hand and asked her to come with him to visit the First Selectman, whose office was across the street. The First Selectman is the chief elected official in some towns, like a mayor. His name was Ed Coer.

Mr. Coer and Reverend Lindsay were both worried about what the men in the big black car wanted to do in Southbury. They had purchased 178 acres of land to build a large training camp for members of their organization, the German American Bund. The German American Bund supported Adolf Hitler and his followers in Germany, the Nazis. Nazis felt that some types of people were better than others. They went on to do terrible things during World War II, including killing millions of people because of their religion, color of their skin, whether they had a disability, and for other reasons. Mr. Coer and Reverend Lindsay did not know what to do to fight these hateful ideas. Lois suggested



Photograph of Lois Lindsay at age 10. Courtesy Lois Lindsay Brown family.

that her father preach about it the next Sunday to let the people know why having a Nazi training camp in their town was not a good idea.

Reverend Lindsay's sermon made it clear that the German American Bund was "un-Christian, un-American and pro Nazi". The sermon was also printed in the newspaper on Monday. On Wednesday there was a Town Meeting. Unlike many Town Meetings, almost all of the residents of the town attended. They voted to make new rules about what land-owners could or could not do on their own property. In particular, the rules prevented military training unless approved by the United States government. This new rule kept the German American Bund from building their camp in Southbury. At the Town Meeting, the citizens also voted unanimously (meaning everyone agreed) to adopt a resolution calling on President Franklin D. Roosevelt to do everything possible to stop Nazism. With that, the German American Bund saw they were not wanted in Southbury.

No other town in the United States took similar actions to stand up to the German American Bund before 1937. As the Reverend Lindsay said to Lois "I think we did the right thing. And because of your idea to preach a sermon on what Nazism is all about, we could show our town how to stand up to hate and fear".

For more about this story, read the illustrated book *Lois's Story: A Young Girl's Inspiration Helps Stop Hate and Fear* by Ed Edelson. 2020. Available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Loiss-Story-Young-Girls-Inspiration/dp/1736247913>.