

-TITLE-ALICA SCHIFFER
-I_DATE-MAY 18, 1998
-SOURCE-CHRISTIAN RESCUERS PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-
-IMAGE_QUALITY-
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
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Note: The times shown are from the VHS counter.

01:34 Born March 3, 1908, she is now 80 years old.

01:65 She was born in Gent and speaks Flemish. In 1965 her younger sister died from cancer.

02:74 Her smallest sister died in the First World War.

03:02 Her father was in WWI, he left her mother home alone with three children.

03:27 Her father built houses for a living.

03:70 Both of her parents influenced her, they were both very nice people.

04:06 They taught her to be good. Although she is catholic, religion was not important in her house. She was taught by her parents, to treat everyone equally.

04:79 She was married once but she divorced him.

05:08 In Gent there were not very many Jewish people. She did not know any Jewish people.

05:27 She was not even aware of what Jews were until the beginning of the war.

05:65 After her divorce she moved to Brussels.

06:30 When she was in Brussels she discovered what Hitler was doing to the Jews. In Brussels she went to her cousins house Lydia. When she arrived at Lydia's house, Lydia was crying; when asked why are you crying? She responded: "Oh my God, the Gestapo took all the Jews away."

06:65 Lydia had a Jewish family living with her. The family consisted of a mother, father and two young girls. The Germans came and took the mother and the father and would soon be back for the girls who were away at school.

07:20 Lydia then asked Alice if she would take the children and keep them safe. The girls names were Lydia and Inge Coleman.

07:60 The two girls came home from school and were told that their parents had been taken by the Gestapo. The girls were told that they would be going away with Alice to be safe and to escape the Gestapo.

07:90 Lydia assured the girls that Alice was a very nice lady and that they would be well taken care of. The girls, naturally, cried. Alice did not know what she was going to do with the girls, but she knew she had to help. She decided to take them to her parents house.

08:33 She gathered the girls clothes and took them to her parents home. She explained to her parents that these were Jewish girls and that they needed to be kept safe. Before she could really help she needed to discuss the problem with her husband Renee.

09:38 Renee was part of the FBI of Belgium, and refused to help his wife. He allowed his wife to do what she had to do, and was assured that he would not tell the authorities.

09:79 She told her husband to tell the authorities that the girls were part of her family and that they were starving.

09:95 A couple of days later she went to pick up the girls who were staying with her parents, and took them home with her.

10:07 She thought to herself that something had to be done with these girls, for she could not keep them for the entire war.

10:13 She told her husband that she was taking the girls to the Pastor and turning them into Catholics.

10:37 The girls attended catechism school for 6 months where they were taught by Nuns. They were baptized and became Catholics.

11:39 After the kids had become Catholics she decided it was time to leave her husband. She had put up with his drinking and infidelity for 15 years. She told him that she had had enough and that she and the girls were leaving.

11:71 It cost her 2000 Francs to get a Society of Brussels for the girls. She bought an apartment in Brussels, but she needed money so she began smuggling food for the Jews. She heard that the Jews had no food.

12:74 She contacted her girlfriend who was still in Gent and asked her to lend her 1000 francs to start up the operation. Both Alice and Rachel, her friend, began smuggling together.

13:67 Rachel had contacts and was able to find out where the Jews were hidden in Brussels. Alice had two families in hiding that she was responsible for. She brought them food twice a week.

13:99 She made her money by supplying not only food, but tobacco for cigarettes as well.

14:22 She smuggled goods in little pockets sewed under her clothing. She was never caught even though there were Germans on the trains.

14:64 Her ex-husband became aware of what she was doing, but he never said a word. Many times Germans travelled on the same train that she traveled on to do her smuggling.

14:85 She was often asked where she was going, she responded by saying that she was going to her cousins house to sew. She carried her cousins business card with her at all times.

15:04 The Germans were not too harsh with the people in Brussels.

15:15 She was never afraid of the Germans.

16:01 She also got a hold of food stamps to give to the Jews. It was a big organization.

16:33 Smuggling was not enough to help the Jews, so she met a political prisoner; Mademoiselle Adrach. She worked with the underground.

16:67 She began to work with Mademoiselle Adrach. She rescued children from schools and brought them to her.

17:11 When they ran out of places to hide the children, she would bring them to her parents house.

17:24 There were times when her parents had 6 or 7 children at one time.

17:55 One day Mademoiselle had been taken by the Gestapo.

17:93 Mademoiselle had been taken to the concentration camps, she survived, but due to her bad health she died shortly after she had been released.

18:12 Mademoiselle prayed so much for the Jews. She was a political prisoner.

20:02 She (Alice) was also smuggling to her 2nd husbands family. They were Jews.

20:69 She started having problems with one of the girls, Lydia. She was beginning to rebel, saying that she was not catholic she was Jew. She ripped up Bibles in the convents. She was only 12 years old.

21:00 Alice brought Lydia to a convent far away until the end of the war.

21:64 When the two girls were in the same convent, they were approached by the gestapo and questioned. The Nuns helped prove that they were not Jewish. They were left alone for the rest of the war.

21:69 Someone took her name and address off of her fake passport and the Gestapo came after her. The man she worked with was taken away. She never saw him again. She was put in jail for 2 days, but she was able to prove that she was not a Jew and that she was still married to Renee who worked with the FBI. She was let go, but she was not free.

22:61 She left notice with all the Jews in hiding that the Gestapo was on to her and that she had to be very careful.

23:95 She was approached by a Jewish woman who begged her to help her 2 children. She agreed and hid the children in a barn in the country side.

24:45 She saw the children everyday to make sure they were doing fine.

24:81 One day the mother begged Alice to bring the kids to her, she missed them terribly and needed to see them. Alice warned her it was very dangerous,

24:81 cont.. and not a very good idea. The Gestapo works all day and all night. She brought them to their mother nonetheless. The next morning she waited by the designated place to bring the kids back into hiding; they never arrived. She rushed to their home to discover that the Gestapo had taken the entire family to the concentration camps. No one ever came back.

25:55 After that incident, she never took any more children to the barn. She was convinced that had the children remained in the barn, they would still be alive today.

26:60 She went back home to discover that the Gestapo was looking for her. Her neighbor and friend Marcella was a very beautiful young women. With her beauty, she was able to distract the Germans and give Alice enough time to gather her things and escape.

26:83 She ran away to Inchsha in Brussels. She had a Catholic friend there that could help her. She was certain that her friend would help her, because she was helping her. Her friend was married to a Jew who was taken away; their only child was kept in hiding at Alices' parents home until the end of the war.

27:54 Her girlfriend returned the favor. Alice stayed with her for 5 months.

27:64 She came out of hiding after the war was over.

28:16 Inge and Lydia (the girls) mother came back after the war. She had survived the camps. Their father had not. "It was something awful."

28:24 Inge is now living in Vancouver, Canada. Lydia is in Israel.

28:32 After the war she ran the streets and heard her name being called out. It was Peter, a friend she worked with in Brussels. Everyone thought she had been taken to the concentration camps.

28:70 Peter had a restaurant. She went with him, and all the people who were still alive in the camps were freed and came to eat in his restaurant. Peter fed everyone for free.

28:91 I still have many Jewish friends.

29:57 Peter began to romance her. He told her he loved her. She responded by telling him she did not love him. He told her she would one day.

29:94 In 1948 she married Peter. He sold his business and they moved to Gent. They opened another business near her parents. A clothing store.

30:24 Peter was a Jew. He lost 33 members of his family in the concentration camps. He only had one brother left after the war. They kept in contact by letter.
Peter and Alice moved to the U.S. to be near Peters brother, to be a family again.

31:07 Peters brother had a terrible wife. She threw Alice and Peter out of the house.

31:07 cont.. after 3 weeks. They were thrown out of the house on Christmas day, in the middle of a snow storm. They were very unhappy, they had no jobs and did not speak the language.

31:08 Peters brother sent up to the Jewish center where we would receive some help.

31:24 She cried and begged Peter to take her home. He promised her he would take good care of her. He refused to leave the U.S.

31:94 They were issued jobs at a day care. It was very hard work. After 6 months she became very ill. She was never professionally active, and not accustomed to the stress.

33:19 They found their own apartment. They lived there for 10 years.
Peter
died 10 years later from lung cancer.

33:36 Everyday she thinks of Peter. She loves him, he was wonderful to her
and her parents.

34:04 When her father was sick in the Hospital his only wish was to die in
his home. The nurses refused to let him go home. Peter demanded his wish be met and made all the arrangements to bring her father back into his own home.

34:43 Peter was born in Austria, he spoke German.

35:50 She loves America, she never wants to go back.

36:28 The children today do not understand, people cannot understand what it was like.

36:93 After the war was the happiest time in her life.

37:10 She was never afraid during the war, nor afraid of what she did during the war.

37:93 She has many friends who do not know or understand how she did what she did during the war.

38:14 She had to do it, she had to help.

38:23 She hates the Germans for what they did. They killed innocent people
who did nothing wrong.

38:34 After the war her cousin Lydia asked her if she was crazy because she felt such a need to help. Alice answered that she had to do something,
anything to help. "When God wants me, God will get me." She knew she was risking her life, but she did not care.

38:55 Lydia told her she was wonderful. Her performance was wonderful.

40:41 She still thinks about the war days, it is very difficult to forget them.
.END.

