

## **RG-50.154.0001**

### **Oral history interview with Alice Adler**

#### **Summary**

Alice Adler, born in 1910 in Budapest, Hungary, describes her experience as a Jew who was caught by the Germans, sent to Auschwitz and survived. Her family comprised of her father, who died when she was 18 years old, her mother and two brothers. All her family was in the women wear design business, and maintained a prestigious and profitable establishment. Her parents were born in Austria, the family was well educated and spoke at least three languages (German, French and Hungarian). She was educated in Budapest and Vienna.

At the time Hungary was deeply anti-Semitic, and from an early age Alice had to deal with very unpleasant situations, sometimes endangering her and her family's lives, especially after the German annexation of Austria in 1938, which was greatly celebrated by the Austrians..

In 1938, Alice had been married for three year but they had no kids. Her husband, along with other Jewish young men, was sent, with the Hungarian Government's consent, to the German border to pick up mines before German troop marched on. About 30,000 were sent but only 3,000 came back. Her husband returned, but he remained sick and died a little later on.

Her younger brother came to America in March of 1939 for the World Fair, and her older brother some time later for another business trip (travel was still open), and they remained in NYC. Alice and her mother decided to leave Budapest later in 1939 and stopped in Paris on their way there. The invasion of Poland on Sept. 1, 1939 delayed her mother's trip for 4 months, and cancelled Alice's'. She returned to Budapest, where she stayed operating, and eventually selling the family business, until the beginning of 1944. On March 18, 1944 she was captured, and two days later she, along with thousands others, was sent to Auschwitz, on a train without water, food and sanitation. They arrived at the end of April/beginning of May 1944.

In Auschwitz, she was selected for forced labor, and sent to an aviation parts factory in Sudeten Deutschland. She stayed there until March 14, 1945, as the Allies were approaching. At the night of March 14<sup>th</sup>, she, along with other prisoners were put on a train allegedly to Nuremberg, where there were still some crematoriums. Half an hour later, as the train was still moving slowly, she jumped out of a small window. She walked back to the camp, was picked by some French prisoners of war, and eventually was delivered to the American Forces.

Although her Mother and two brothers were already in America, Alice did not have any papers, which made her entry to the country problematic. She went to Paris and worked for a year with the United Nations and the American Consulate to obtain papers, and finally she come to NYC in March, 1946. When she arrived in Paris at her liberation, she was 75 pounds; after a year, when she arrived in the US, 160 lb.

The Germans vaccinated all the Jewish women to sterilize them. Not every vaccination was permanent, but Alice's was. She was remarried to an attorney, who was sent to Japan to represent Japanese war criminals as defense counsel. He came back and opened a practice in NYC. Eventually they moved to Sarasota, FL