

ALICE RUDA  
RG-50.154.0023 (rec. 1986 Florida)

Alice Ruda was born in 1927 in a small town in southern Czechoslovakia with a large Jewish community. Her father owned lumber mills and they were quite wealthy. She had one brother. Her parents were active in the Jewish community. Alice started in Gymnasium in 1938, but when her part of Czechoslovakia was ceded to Hungary, she continued her studies in a Hungarian high school.

The restrictions on Jewish life began in 1938, In 1942 the part of her family that remained in German held area of the country were sent to Majdanek and never heard from again. Alice said she had a fairly normal life until 1944. The restriction started when the Jews had to wear the yellow star and give up their radios and cars. Her father was sent to a labor camp. Alice, though, was able to attend college in a convent as the only Jew. The nuns there offered to hide her family, but they didn't accept the offer.

One day the Jewish population was sent to a big building and kept for 2 weeks. Her mother was beaten when the Hungarians tried to find out where the family hid their money and jewels. They were then sent to a ghetto and from there to Auschwitz. Alice describes the horrible trip on the cattle cars that took one week without food or water. She describes getting to the train station where the Germans were holding whips and she remembers having to parade in front of Dr. Mengele. Her grandparents were taken to the gas right away and she and her mother were separated from her brother. After they had their heads shaved, Alice didn't recognize her mother.

After a few months Alice and her mother volunteered with 1000 women and were sent to work in an underground ammunitions factory in Allendorf. There they worked the night shift and had better food. The commander was nice to them and really saved their lives because he stalled when they were supposed to be taken on a forced march. (After liberation he was arrested but the Jews under him in the factory made sure he was not charged). Finally, they were made to march out of the factory in March 1945. Nine of them ran into the forest for 3-4 days (including her mother). When they came out to find out what was happening, they found that they had been liberated by the American Army. There Alice worked as a translator

In June 1945 Alice and her mother returned to their home and found that her father had survived by hiding with gentile friends. They went to Israel in 1948 when the communists took over, but they never made a go of it in Israel. Alice's uncle in New York recognized her from an article in the Brooklyn Eagle newspaper, and helped them come to the United States in 1951. Alice married a boy from her home town and had 2 children. The family lived in New York and then decided to move to Florida where her mother was living.