

-TITLE-ALICE CALDER
-I_DATE-2/24/90
-SOURCE-SAN FRANCISCO HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-1 HR - 30 MINUTES
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

:01 - Alice was born in 1920 in Hamburg, Germany. She was an only child. Her father was a merchant. She lived a "very ordinary" life in Germany and attended a Jewish school. After Hitler came to power, her school had to begin accepting Jewish students who were being expelled from German schools. Her family was very religious, explaining why she attended a Jewish girls school, which was not necessarily common for Jewish children before 1933 . Her father had a brother and four sisters.

:04 - During her youth, she had Gentile friends until these friends were forbidden to play with her once Hitler came to power. She lived in a non-Jewish neighborhood, though her family was very active in the Jewish community. She belonged to a Jewish youth group, which was vital as a support group and which served as the focal point of her social life, especially since Jewish teenagers were not allowed to associate with their Gentile counterparts. There were many such youth groups in Germany during the 1930's, some religious, some secular, and some with a Zionist focus.

7:30 - Alice comments that since she attended to a Jewish school, she grew up somewhat segregated from non-Jews, though she knew many Jews who "hardly knew they were Jews." She says her family looked down on these Jews because they felt these Jews barely knew themselves. Alice was happy knowing "where I belonged ... and enjoyed being Jewish."

9:00 - Her parents separated when Alice was nine, and she did not see her father for another nine years, though they did keep in touch through the mail. Alice's mother never explained to her why her father left. She remained close to her father's family.

13:40 - Alice was very aware of the disturbing events outside her close community. Her first memory of the increased anti-Semitism following the rise of Hitler was a one-week, Nazi-led boycott of Jewish shops in the beginning of April, 1933. The Nazis continued to discourage Gentiles From shopping at Jewish stores, and many shops were unable to survive with only Jewish customers.

17:00 - Alice's uncle was a chemist who owned a small chemical

factory. In 1938, he, his wife, and his child left Germany, due largely to the insistence of his wife.

18:30: Alice says that in northern Germany, anti-Semitism was not as severe as in southern Germany. She says that her Gentile neighbors did not think that there should be a boycott of Jewish stores and did not particularly dislike Jews. However, "little by little, their minds became poisoned." Gentiles, eventually, would no longer even greet Jews in the streets because non-Jews were forbidden to do so.

20:30: Bit by bit, life in Germany became "worse and worse and worse." To leave Germany, however, was not easy. It required money, connections, and/or relatives abroad. To be allowed to emigrate to the United States, for example, one needed a sponsor. By the time Hamburg's Jews discerned that life was not going to improve, "the whole world was closed to us."

21:40 - Alice comments that because the intensification of the subjugation and oppression of the Jews was such a gradual process, "it was very difficult to realize what was happening."

22:15 - By 1935, Jews were forbidden to attend theaters and movies. Jewish doctors and lawyers were among the first to leave the country because of restrictions forbidding any professional association with Gentiles. Their livelihood, in essence, had been stripped from them.

24:40 - Following the boycott in 1933, Alice was scarcely effected by Nazi anti-Semitic policies until 1935. By 1935, however, anti-Semitic incidents increased in frequency. Jews were often humiliated in the streets. Her personal experience was limited, of course, to events in Hamburg. The first great restriction imposed upon Jews was their banishment from cultural events. Signs appeared at such venues as theaters and stadiums which read "no Jews allowed."

27:30 - Alice was not greatly disturbed by the fact that she could no longer play with her non-Jewish companions. Every time a new series of anti-Jew laws were enacted, it was widely believed that "this would be the end" and that the Nazi campaign against the Jews had crested. "We could never imagine it getting worse."

28:30 - One anti-Semitic law Alice remembers forbade German women under 35 from working as maids for Jews, for fear that Jewish men would rape them.

30:00: Before 1938 (when her uncle and his family emigrated to Argentina), Alice's family did not consider leaving. Her grandfather, in particular, thought it was foolish for people to leave to new countries where they had no job waiting and where they did not know the language.

30:40 - In 1939, Alice received a note from a friend in England

informing her that she could get her a job in England if Alice could get out of Germany. By 1939, more and more Jews had finally realized that there was little hope left in Germany. Alice's mother though, would not leave Alice's grandfather behind.

33:00 - Alice once again recounts the increasing difficulty Jews faced in Germany. In 1937, Jews had to hand over all of their valuables, save for one set of silverware and a wedding ring. Many of the valuables Alice's family was forced to relinquish included many objects of great sentimental value.

36:00 - The next memorable incident was Kristallnacht. She was working for a furrier at the time. On her way to work the morning after Kristallnacht, she noticed that merchandise from all the Jewish-owned department stores was thrown about the streets and that these stores' windows were shattered. She saw a synagogue continuing to burn. When Alice reached work, she learned that the couple who owned the store had been deported to Poland during the preceding evening. The store owners were Polish Jews, and all Jews in Germany who were born in Poland (and their immediate families) were forced to leave Germany. A couple of Nazis entered the store. They arrested the other men who had arrived for work simply "because they were Jews." Alice went home, where she learned that during the preceding night many Jewish men had been sent to concentration camps, including her father. She realized at this point that Hitler meant what he said in *Mein Kampf* concerning the Jews. All of her family wanted to leave after Kristallnacht.

41:15 - Alice reached England and tried to get her mother out as well. However, she was there only three months when the war began. Communications with Germany were cut, except for messages (which could be no longer than 25 words) delivered by the Red Cross. She eventually received a letter from her grandfather in which she learned that her mother and her aunts had been deported. That letter marked the last time she heard from her family in Germany. She eventually learned that her grandfather had died in an old age home in Hamburg on Sept. 4, 1942 -- the same day she married her fiancée in England.

45:00 - Before the war, Jews in Germany were afraid of the consequences of failing to obey the Nazis' anti-Semitic laws. Jews who did not obey were arrested, though most returned -- including those arrested on Kristallnacht. Their internments, though, often lasted several months.

These prisoners had been treated in the concentration camps like animals, and their heads had been shaved. Alice had left in June, 1939. Most Jews who returned from concentration camps and most of those in Germany failed to leave Germany before the war began and the Final Solution implemented. Alice had left before the Jews were forced to wear armbands bearing a yellow Star of David.

48:00 - Before Alice left, however, all Jewish women who did not have a Jewish name were forced to adopt the middle name "Sarah" and the men the name "Israel, " unless they changed their name to an entirely Jewish name. Her passport had a large, red "J" stamped in it. She still possesses this passport.

48:20 - Before leaving Germany, Alice had a Mischling, secular boyfriend. She also had Jewish boyfriend, who were arrested on Kristallnacht but returned. Her secular boyfriend, who survived the war, shared the same name as her present husband.

51:00 - Alice saw her father before leaving Germany. At the time, the reunion did not seem very significant.

52:00 - Alice eventually learned that her mother had been deported to Riga and that her father was arrested in 1941 in Berlin. The Nazis kept extensive records during the Holocaust and as a survivor, Alice has been able to review archives provided to her by the West German government. Many books about Hamburg's Jews are being published.

54:00 - Her father, she has learned, was sent to Auschwitz.

54:20 - Her uncle who emigrated in 1938 died in 1975 in Argentina. Alice had visited her several times and kept in touch with him constantly. She still has a cousin who lives in Argentina. He is the only family member (apart from her husband and children) she has left.

56:30 - Alice says that the older Jews in Germany were much less likely than the younger ones to realize the magnitude of Nazi intentions. Ergo, they were less likely to attempt to leave Germany.

57:00 - In England, Alice worked as a domestic for a non-Jewish family in Kent. She was treated as a member of the family and cared for the family's child. She stayed with them for a year.

59:00 - Alice was forced to leave her family because the English government considered Jewish immigrants from Germany potential "fifth columnists." Kent was outside the alien restricted areas. She was forced to move to London, where initially the government limited the types of occupations in which she and other German immigrants could engage.

60:00 - In London, she worked at a Jewish old age home, a job she disliked immensely. In 1941, though, she was able find work in a Jewish-owned fashion store. In 1942, she met her husband.

61:00: In England, she had no family and only a few friends from Germany who were also able to escape. In London, she shared a room with a friend.

63:00 - In 1942 she met her future husband at a concert in London. Her husband was in the army. He was stationed in Scotland but was on leave. He was a German who came to England from Switzerland. They married three months after they met but were only able to see each other for a few weeks during this period. She had a son in 1944. Her husband served in West Africa and Burma after the war. They had a daughter in 1950.

69:30 - In 1953, Alice's family emigrated to San Francisco. She has worked mostly at home. Her husband has held many jobs and was able to improve his lot in life.

71:00 - Alice says it has been difficult to discuss her and her husband's experiences with the children. She has written a short memoir for them to read. Her daughter has encouraged her parents to relate their experiences. She still does not speak to her children very often about her experiences and can not relate her story without crying. It is very painful for her.

73:20 - Alice has no intention to ever visit Germany. Her husband, at the time of the interview, planned to visit for the first time since leaving Germany his birthplace in Berlin. Alice feels it would be too painful to accompany her husband. She would not want to encounter any Germans who are her age. When she meets Germans her age in America, she wonders privately what they did between 1933 and 1945.

75:10 - Alice feels that her experience has caused her to be a very protective parent. For example, she discouraged her son from attending a university in Mexico.

78:00 - Both of her children married non-Jews, though her daughter-in-law is a convert. She is "the best Jew in the family." Her children had many non-Jewish friends growing up.

79:35 - Alice would have liked her children to marry Jews, but she and her husband are close to their in-laws.

81:18 - Alice feels that she and her husband have shared similar experiences has helped their marriage. It has helped them understand each other.

82:45 - Alice still has occasional nightmares about her experience and the Holocaust. She notes that neither she nor her husband have in-laws through their marriage and her children grew up with practically no relatives besides their parents. Her nightmares are about concentration camps and what her parents' experiences in them might have been like.

84:40 - Alice does not watch Holocaust movies nor does she watch television shows about the Holocaust. She does hope, though, that the general public does view movies like Shoah. She still thinks that many people do not believe that many of the Nazi atrocities could actually have occurred. For that reason, she has agreed to do the interview.

86:00 - Alice has close relations with other survivors, many of whom she has met through her synagogue.

86:00 - The thoughts of what happen to her and her family rarely leaves her for an extended period of time. To enjoy life, she tries to block the experience out of her mind. For example, she will call a friend, read a book, or watch TV in order to divert her thoughts from her experience. The thoughts, however, "keep coming back." She has not seen a therapist. She says that she has been able to enjoy life and is very happy.
.END.