

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Alina Beard

Date of interview: 7/24/1996

Summary: Alina Egra Beard was born in Poland in 1916. The family were from Vienna, however her mother was at the home of Alina's grandmother, in Poland, as her father had been called up to the Austrian Army. The family later returned to Austria.

Alina had a brother who was at medical school and he was an active socialist. Alina was active too. When she was in graduate school the Germans invaded Austria in half a day. There was a lot of violence with beatings and killings of Austrian citizens. She became friends with many SS officers whom she tutored and they were civil to her but verbally exposed her to racism.

Alina had an uncle who lived in the USA and arranged for the family to come to the US and live with him in Milwaukee the very night that Hitler's forces crossed the border. They began to sell their belonging because they knew that they would not be allowed to take any material possessions with them. Within a month they had papers permitting their travel and they took a train to Paris. On the train they experienced many stops and car checks by officers who often confiscated possessions and removed people from the train. While in Paris they stayed at a hotel and saw a couple who were friends, and who had left their young baby in Austria. They came to Paris with messages for others who had previously fled. From Paris they took a boat to New York.

They lived with her father's brother's family and moved around in search of work. She now lives in San Francisco with her husband and is close to her four children.