## YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

## ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War II

Personal Experience

OH 1591

ALICE HORN

Interviewed

by

Matthew Butts

on

July 10, 1996

## ALICE HORN

Alice Horn was born on April 24, 1916 in Youngstown, Ohio, the daughter of Todd and Charlotte Butts She grew up on Kenmore Avenue on the city's South side and graduated from South High in 1934

Horn attended Youngstown College following graduation. She received a technical degree in secretarial training in 1934 Upon completion of her course work, she worked as a clerical specialist for the Youngstown <u>Vindicator</u>

After the outbreak of World War II, Mrs Horn decided to contribute to the nation's war effort by accepting a position in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) She met her future husband, M Brooks Horn, traveling to Washington, D C to assume her new duties After a brief courtship, they married and Alice resigned from her position Between 1944 and 1945, she spent several months at a prisoner of war camp for captured Axis soldiers that her husband's military police unit guarded in Arizona, Montana, and California

After the end of the war, Mrs Horn and her husband moved to Chicago, Illinois Their son Gregory Spencer was born in 1946

Mrs Horn resides in Lake Forest, Illinois She spends much of her free time volunteering for local charities, traveling, and spending time with her pets

- B This is an interview with Alice Hoin for the Youngstown State University Oral History Piogiam, on the World War II Pioject, by Matthew Butts, at Lake Foiest, Illinois, on July 15, 1996, at 2 30 p m.
  Thank you for sitting down with me today. Normally we start off with a little bit about your background, where you came from, a little bit about your parents
- H This is to be a personal thing?
- B Yes
- H I should start off by saying my name is Alice Horn I was born in Youngstown, Ohio My parents were Todd M Butts and Charlotte Shaffer Butts My father was one of two children who had an older sister My mother was the youngest of nine children My childhood, as far as I know, was pretty normal, with the exception of when they took me to visit an old cemetery I was curious and I reached up I was only three years old. I caught hold of like a basin on the top This was concrete, but it was old and loose When I put my weight on it, it fell and struck my left leg. I did so much damage to the bones and stuff it was eighteen months until I could walk again on that leg Maybe that is why it gives me trouble now, could be My childhood was pretty normal. I wanted a dog, which I was never allowed to have Always when you get your own home you could have a dog, but I had a lot of cats which I loved dearly My older brother and I had about six years difference in our ages We were always good friends all our lives I was very fond of him and he put up with an awful lot of me We had a great relationship
- B What was his name?
- H My brother's name was Melvin Todd Butts. I always called him Buzzy
- B What was Youngstown like growing up?
- H Youngstown, when I grew up, was mainly a steel town My father was a machinist and worked with a little measurer and had to measure big pieces of iron He had to measure everything that was done He would measure almost to the smallest fraction of an inch That is what he did in the mills My brother was the smart one in the family I mentioned him before He graduated from high school He was sixteen in November of that year It was during the depression My father had lost his job. He took a job selling Watkins Products He had a basket and he would go from door to door trying to sell things to people from this basket of products that you would pay quarters for My uncle had an empty lot about two miles away from our house He let us use the empty lot for gardening My father used to take a big basket, hoe, and shovel, walk two miles out, carry a lunch and walk back at night to plant a garden and take care of it That is how we got some of our food during the depression After it was over, he went back to his job and Youngstown Steel was it

- B Youngstown Sheet and Tube?
- H No, it was not a sheet and tube company It might have been Youngstown Steel I am not sure My brother had to go to work He should have gone to college, but we had no money for it He got a job at the Isley Dairy Company It was an ice cream manufacturer in Youngstown Mr Isley took a liking to him My brother was taught to drive, so he used to drive Mr Isley all over to the various stores while he went in and checked on them.

I think when my brother was probably 21 or 22, he gave him one of the stores to manage It was up on the North side of Youngstown by Elm Street He was young, but he was smart He did a good business for the Isley Company Then he went to work for Standard Oil They wanted him in the office, but since money seemed to be a pretty prime object, a good bit of the time he drove a truck because you could make more money driving a truck than doing office work I think he was still doing that when he died. No he was not. He had his own store then

Later on he quit that and opened a store not too far from where we lived It was on Hillman Street in Youngstown, Ohio His wife Lucille used to go up there and bake pies, homemade potato salad, coleslaw, that sort of thing He developed a mix to make milk shakes, a powder mix He had the formula for that He sold that He also sold cement blocks I do not think he had anything patented Maybe he did He sold those, then. Those were the first cement blocks I had ever seen I think he was working there when he died

Of course, he was always a hard worker. Unfortunately, he smoked quite a few cigarettes Being his own place of business he wanted to open up early in the morning and have everything cleaned up and ready for the next morning so he worked late at night Actually, I think he died of over work He did not have enough time to relax He was a great guy

- B What street did you live on in Youngstown?
- H We lived on Kennmore That was on the South side of Youngstown
- B What was the neighborhood like?
- H When I was younger we had decent German neighbors, and one Italian family across the street from us He was always bringing us over some homemade wine which my mother really enjoyed, but hated to admit My father never drank anything Then we got colored people that moved in It seemed then that once you get a different nationality, color, or race moves in, it changes completely Some of the nicest neighbors we ever had were a colored couple that lived next door to us Their name was Glass. They were very lovely people

In those days your neighbors were really neighbors They would come back and forth maybe just to have a cup of coffee with you in the morning, or they would bake a

cake and send half the cake over or pie We never locked our doors There was no need of that It was just great then because you knew all your neighbors, you knew them by their first names It was just like a big family Now you are lucky if you even know your neighbors name anymore, or at least around here.

I am trying to think how old my brother was when he died? He died early Chris was eight years old when he died That was their youngest child The two oldest ones, Tommy and Sandra were both married when Chris was born I am pretty sure of that I do not think my brother goes to church much anymore

As my parents got older, we started going to a church that was nearer to our house because when we went to the First Christian Church it was on the north side of Youngstown We would take a bus downtown, get a transfer, then take another bus to get up to it We started going to a Methodist Church, I think it was on Hillman Street in Youngstown Along about that time I got married I moved out of town at first I met my husband in Pittsburgh You do not want to go through that?

B Yes

H During the war, I thought everybody was doing something for the war, so what can I do? I got a job with the F B I in Washington, D C They checked my background, everything, what organizations I belonged to in school, this, that After three months of that they notified me that I had a position in Washington, D C My mother put me on a train in Youngstown and said, "Now, do not talk to strangers"

There was a boy that I used to date back home They were two brothers I dated both of them kind of off and on The one was in Washington at the time My parents put me on the train and said, "Do not talk to strangers Call us as soon as you get there." I said okay When I got off the train it would be Washington, D C Very shortly after we stopped and they said, "Everybody off" We got off and here I was in Pittsburgh I was not supposed to even touch down in Pittsburgh They said, "We are moving troop trains We have to get out of the way You stay here and the transfer will pick you up in a while"

While I was standing around the station, a lieutenant in the Army came up and started talking to me. Of course, I did not dare talk to him. I kept turning the other way My luggage was beside me When the train came by that I could get on to go to Washington I could not pick up my luggage. He carried my luggage on the train, and what do I do? I am following my luggage, of course. We sat together from Pittsburgh to Washington, D C My, what a snow job

Anyway, I was wearing an engagement ring I was engaged to a boy in the Navy Air Corps. He was in Europe at that time He said, "Where are you staying?" I said, "Right now I am staying at the Descher While Hotel until they set us up. We have rooms in the dormitory for the F B I for girls " By this time the fellow I knew in Washington met me at the train when I got off and we went over to the hotel

Blooks Horn was already at the hotel Here he had an uncle that used to be national secretary of the Poultry, Butter, and Egg Association He had a card that he had

given to Brooks Horn The card is one that you could present at any hotel The understanding being that the hotel always had two or three rooms in reserve If you had one of those special cards, you would have a room Bob and I got to the hotel Brooks was already there registering

From then on I would get up in the morning and he would be there I would come out of the F B I building at lunch time and he would be there Of course, it was April and there is no place like Washington, D.C in April because all the cherry blossoms are out. It was just beautiful I met him on the first of April and on the tenth of April, I called my parents and told them that everything was fine I said, "I am going to get married." My mother said, "Is it Jack?" That was the fellow in the Navy Air Corps I said, "No " She said, "Is it Bill?" I said, "No " "Who is it?" I said, "Brooks Horn " She said, "Who is Blooks Horn? Not that terrible person sitting behind you when you left?" I said, "No mother" "Where did you meet him?" "I met him in Pittsburgh" "What were you doing in Pittsburgh?" I said, "They put me off the train and I had to wait for another train. I am just calling you to let you know that I am getting married " "Married, do not do a thing Your father and I will be there as soon as we could get there " I said, "Mother, that will be fine We will be glad to see you, but by the time you get here we will be married " On April 11 we were married, ten days after we met We met on the first of April On the fourth of fifth of April he applied for a wedding license for us We made up our minds in a hurry. We were married for 48 years

- B What were you doing with the F.B I when you went down there?
- H Fingerprinting I had to walk in on that poor guy to tell him I was quitting
- B. Who was your supervisor?
- H. I talked to Hoover himself. I do not know about my supervisor. It was fun There were a lot of nice looking men in that room when I was working, but I did not get a chance to know them
- B. After you were married, where did you go?
- H We were married in Rockville, Maryland We went over there and Reverend Virgil Lilly married us there From there we went right back to Battle Creek, Michigan, because Brooks's leave was up and we went back to Battle Creek, Michigan That is where he was stationed at that time It was funny when we were there The men in his groups used to say, "Lieutenant Horn, where is your daughter this morning?" We would go in a night club and I had to have identification or they would not let me in without showing my card Everybody was teasing Brooks about his daughter. We had a pretty good time there, though. We were only there a short period of time

We moved to Arizona and he was put in charge of a German P O W group of prisoners we had They were very pleasant young men They spoke English Of course,

there was no place for them to go to out there They had no bars or anything like that around their quarters They served at the officers club They really were not any more interested in going to war than we had been They were very nice young men They were homesick They asked people if they could hold their babies As far as I could see they were very fine young men

The only problem was the doctors at that camp were Jewish and they hated them with a passion They did everything they could to make them uncomfortable Many of the German P O W's had arms swollen up They had given them shots and broke off the needle in it One young man had a broken leg They moved them around the countryside on freight trains with no benches or anything to sit on except the floor They had so many in there that they could only literally stand side by side. When the unloaded them, there was this one day this fellow was standing down on the ground with this big bull whip and was cracking it saying, "Hurry up. We do not have all day " The one fellow fell and they would not give him time to get up They kept moving the guys out and the fellow had a broken leg and all kinds of bumps and bruises He finally got up from under there It was pretty weird

After being there, my husband was given charge of the Japanese prisoners of war out in the bay of San Francisco That was interesting, but they were completely different because they were very suicidal It was a dishonor for them to be taken prisoners They could not have shoe laces, belts, anything at all They must have been two story high of fine wire so they could not get footing all around the enclosure where they were It was on a place called Angel Island out in the bay We used to take a boat and go from there and the boat stopped first at Alcatraz To get over to where the Japanese prisoners of war were, we went to the island beyond that That was our second stop

There was an incident that happened that I thought was rather interesting. The people on Angel Island went on Alcatraz to do laundry and things A couple of the prisoners from Alcatraz got the idea maybe they could keep out a piece of laundry and get out of their stripped uniforms by saving They saved up socks, one thing at a time so there was not an uproar about these clothes missing I do not know how long it took them to get a civilian outfit They got the clothes and they finally got enough They got on the boat at the first island there where they were kept, Alcatraz They were dressed like civilians No one knew the difference If we had gone straight back to San Francisco they could have gotten away We had to go on out to an island where the Japanese P O W 's were By the time we got there, they got the call wired that there were two prisoners missing. So the fellows got caught I felt so sorry for them

That was quite interesting there It was a beautiful town The hills at night, it was just like ferryland I guess there are so many gays out there now it is probably a good name for it I loved that city I was there for quite a while because I got a job at the Bank of America Brooks was then transferred to Montana I went out with him the first weekend and he had German P O W 's out there digging potatoes. He lived in a box car There were no sanitary things I would of had to live in a room above a garage There was nothing in the town to do. It was just prisoners digging potatoes

I kept our apartment in San Francisco and got a job at that bank and stayed there

Of course, when Brooks moved away I had the apartment to myself I rented it out to a girl I worked with at the Bank of America Her husband was a Navy man I do not know what he was doing out there, but he was there on a daily basis working for the Navy They shared our apartment Of course, it was all well and good until Brooks came home and he had no place to sleep

We left San Francisco shortly after that and went back to Chicago I had to meet the family That was quite an ordeal Brooks was funny He could get out of things He said, "Take off your wedding ring" He had gone out and gotten me a little engagement ring and a wedding ring He said, "Take your rings off and put them in your purse" I did it We got in there and we were over one of his cousins His aunt and uncle literally raised him because his mother died when he was twelve or thirteen His father traveled all the time in his work He was sent to military school in Tennessee His aunt and uncle had two daughters and they were both married He had one brother who was thirteen years older

It was a brother and his wife that invited us all over to their house We were seated around the dining room table I am sitting there beside Brooks Everyone wanted to know all about me I did not know what to tell them I did not have rings on so they said, "Were you born in Battle Creek?" I said, "No " I was thinking they will think I am a camp follower They said, "What did you do there?" I was thinking, what did I do. I said "I worked in an office " They said, "What kind of an office?" I was telling lies just as they came to me Of course, if you tell lies you have to remember them later. Forget it I was making up a story as I was going along

We were half way through lunch and Brooks said to me, "Put on your rings" I got them out and he said, "I have an announcement Alice and I are married" His aunt said, "Oh, my poor darling," and she started crying Brooks said, "I do not feel good I have to go lie down" He went off in the bedroom and left me there with all these people that I had just met I had been telling them all this stuff and it was all lies Oh god That was really something I could have killed him I was so mad because of all these strange faces were looking at me and asking me questions I told them one thing, then I had to tell them something else It turned out fine and they treated me really nice We had a good time

In fact, his aunt and uncle lived on Ridge Avenue, up close at about one block from where Evanston starts, the outer northern limits of Chicago They had an apartment there that only had one bedroom They had a bed you pulled out and opened up They gave us our bedroom and gave us a bed that you rolled out and opened up because apartments were very sparse We had a terrible time finding one We finally found an apartment I had two cats and there were no babies or animals allowed in the apartment It was like a hotel apartment with my two cats We had a living room and a Murphy bed, the ones you pull down from the wall That was our bedroom and living 100m Then we had a dressing room, a bathroom, a little dinette, and a kitchen We had no garage We were not supposed to have any children, but I was already pregnant Anyway, they left us in

We stayed there until Greg was about three years old That was nice because we

were actually on the south side and we were just two blocks over from Lake Michigan. We met other young couples in the building One of them had a baby boy and was only a month or two older than Greg Norma, that was her name She and I used to get the babies and put them in their buggies and walk down to the beach We spent a lot of time there I almost drowned once I have been terribly afraid of water I thought Greg is never going to know it I would wait out because the sand went out gradually There I was taking him out He could hardly walk I was taking him out in the water He did not know until he was in his mid teens that I was terrified of water He is a good swimmer He goes deep sea diving and everything That worked out fine It was nice and enjoyable for us We had a good time

We were there at least three years before we finally found another apartment on the north shore That was a bigger apartment, a basement apartment, but it was fine We had two bedrooms, a living room It is funny I draw a blank when I think of a dining room We must not have had a dining room We had the kitchen and bathroom of course There was still no garage There were so many apartments and no garages in Chicago I cannot remember what happened next I missed Mother's day I always liked to go back on Mother's Day to see my parents

Brooks was working for American Motors at that time in Detroit, so we had a lot of back and forth to Detroit. When he would leave for Detroit, I would hop in the car and take my two cats and Greg and drive to Youngstown and sit up all night and talk to my parents The next morning I would head back to Chicago and be there by the time he got back That way it did not worry him and I got to see my parents because I was home sick for them That was fine Then where did we move?

My mother died when Greg was three She just dropped dead when she and I were talking We were packing a picnic lunch to go down to Mill Creek Park to have a picnic Greg had just had his bath and we put him to bed for his nap She just said to me, "Alice, I feel so strange" I turned toward her and she started to slump I caught her to break her fall We called the paramedics right away We could not reach our family doctor We got him later He said, "I could not have saved her if I had been right here with her It was a massive heart attack That is the way she went

Daddy wanted me to stay with him for a while Greg and I stayed at home with Dad Brooks was very nice He came down as often as he could on the weekends We stayed there for maybe three or four months It was hard Greg got up, "Where is Grandma?" He had just seen her hours before. It was sad We got through that I stayed with my dad for a while. I tried to find a housekeeper The thing was he wanted somebody in the house with him all the time You cannot get somebody to stay seven days and seven nights. It seemed like I kept going back and forth there trying to find somebody that would live in with him

Charlie Rothe died He and his wife had a lot of fun I knew their two children He and his wife were older than me Her husband died That gave Daddy somebody to visit They were only about seven or eight blocks away We would dress up and go down and visit with her. That was nice It was nice companionship. I never heard him say a word about marriage He never mentioned marriage or anything By then they were probably both in their sixties I was 30 when Mother died. She died when she was 70 I think my father only lived two or three years after her when he died.

We sold the houses and I came back to Chicago We bought our first house then on Valley road here in Lake Forest It is funny when I am talking about Chicago it does not seem I am living here in Illinois That is about it This is our second home, here We moved from the first house we bought to this one Brooks wanted more property and one day I happened to see this listed in the Realtor's booklet I brought him out here and as soon as he saw it he said, "I have to have it " The couple we bought it from was a young couple that recorded for the Rolling Stones They traveled a lot They wanted to live in New York They traveled a lot between Europe and New York They wanted to get 1 of this house They would go away and they would leave it

In the greenhouse about a third of the windows were broken out It was all run down There were no doors on the closets, none of this woodwork We put all new doors on We put on new hardware and everything We liked the room size so we knew it would make a nice house We changed this fire place, put in this book case, added the ceiling. We got a great buy on this house We got it for \$115,000 or \$117,000 with almost six acres, the rock garden, the green house The garage was old so we tore it down and had this new one built. We ended up putting \$80,000 in remodeling into the house It was just endless because they had done nothing with it at all Like I say, the size of the rooms and everything, we knew it would make a nice house. It is build like a fortress The walls are so thick Even between the second and third floor, you go up and there is a pull down latter It is about twelve inches deep of poured concrete When it storms badly, I am fine It is like a fortress There is never any shaking or anything I think sometimes it sort of slips a little bit Once or twice I saw cracks, but apparently it is nothing serious We had enjoyed it

It has two stain cases because originally this was the servants quarters These guest windows along here were doorways for the carriages that they kept there They had the two stair cases because they had live in help They had wires connected from the big house to this back bedroom when we came They had buttons and wires so they could call for the people The gardens were so extensive and the trimming and everything they did around here, they hired 40 gardeners to take care of it Would you believe that? Brooks used to think maybe there was jewelty or something hidden in there some place because the people that owned the big house were very wealthy He always thought that it was underneath the rock garden because it comes up high in some places We have a couple pipes out there that look like they could have been ain pipes They were open pipes just stuck down in the ground that were sticking up so high He thought maybe they had a passage there and they hid stuff there He thought at one time we would go out and have some excavating done, then we decided if anybody got word of this it would be a mad house back there

For a long time he thought maybe they had builed some stuff there They had this underground passage to get into the green house because the green house has a lower level and its own heating plant He thought they would come in through there maybe and up the stairs It was interesting We got it for a fraction of what it was worth They wanted to get out of here so we were very fortunate. Now they can get a million and a half for it We have lived here for a good many years You know everything goes up We put up the new garages There was no drive back here. It was just dirt where you drove in, all kinds of things like that. Am I forgetting the time?

- B No, I just have a couple specific questions Do you remember the camp in Arizona, what it was called?
- H I never heard it called by a name I do not think it had a name, I really do not The Japanese one, that was just where they kept the Japanese, out on Angel Island
- B Do you remember how many German soldiers were at the camp?
- H No, I do not I do not think there was a lot. Of course, out there we only had one car at the time There were no places to go anyway I guess all the time we lived in Arizona we lived there We rented a room in a doctor's house It was a great big room with a huge bedroom It was one of the tall ones, fourteen foot ceilings We had a double door like a French door, although it was not that fancy It opened up onto a side yard.

We parked our cai on a little dirt 10ad that ran off the main road in front of our place When I walked out there at night, I never knew if I wanted to carry a flashlight because of the iguanas, a lot of those were out there I did not want to see them, yet I did not want to step on them It was quite something

We had this big bedroom and a bath with it, and the side door where we went out We took all our meal out and that was a little town called Florence, Arizona Right across this little dirt street where we left our car was a family of Mexicans They had a little low wire fence around and their little young babies running around stark naked They had a goat, chickens, they were all fenced in together The doctor lived upstairs with an Indian woman. I cannot ever remember talking to her She took care of his needs They lived upstairs I do not even know what anybody looks like anymore We saw very little of them

We were there only three months before he was shipped out to San Francisco. That was unusual. It was an interesting little town We had superstition mountain in the background We used to take his service revolver and practice shooting cactus There was not much to do there. They had old buildings and bullet holes and stuff when Wells Fargo went through there and everything It was very historic Now it is so grown up, that there would be nothing left we would recognize I have not been out there in about 50 years I think we left there in the fall of 1944. It has been 52 years, a big change

- B How close were you to where the prisoners were kept?
- H It is funny, I draw a blank I cannot remember if they were in tents or barracks I can remember the railroad sighting where they came in and unloaded them I could remember the building where they Jewish doctors were where you went for shots and this

and that They might have lived in tents I know they came over and were really nice at the officers club They did everything for us They brought us stuff at the pool

- B How about the Japanese soldiers Do you remember what that camp looked like?
- H That camp was very barren and very stark It was dark and very wooded there They had this big high fence with small openings all around it They were different They did not want to see us Everything was taken away from them so they could not commit suicide
- B Is there anything you would like to add to the interview?
- H: San Francisco itself I thought was fascinating I mentioned the apartment we found That was nice I came home one day with a cat and the land lady saw me coming with it and said, "You are not coming in here with a cat." I thought, "What am I going to do," because I had been horseback riding and I was over at Golden Gate Park Brooks was away and she would not let me in the apartment I went down to Fisherman's Warf and I dropped it off there. It is so different than it is now Now the last time about two or three years ago when we went out there, I said, "You will love Fisherman's Warf It is so picturesque." It was so commercial Nothing was the same

We had that long Warf that extended out into the water On Powell Street we had this steep hill I think it is the steepest street in the country I believe There used to be a fish house there Everything was changed I was so disappointed That one section I used in the Bank of America, was all modernized and everything. We used to have a restaurant where I worked with a Chinese girl I was very fond of I forgot her name She and an American girl and I used to go to a restaurant they called the Black Cat It was so Bohemian, I was just thrilled to death with it It would not be anything, and they always had a good business We could be sitting there with three of us in a booth and they could bring over a big black man to sit there and eat with you I thought this was wonderful. I had never seen anything like that back home They had saw dust on the floor and red and white checkered clothes on the table I took the stray cat down there and left it there I thought with all these restaurants it would get something to eat

- B You mentioned V J Day in San Francisco What was that like?
- H Brooks said, "Go in the house and stay Do not go out in the street at all" It was wild Sailors and soldiers were grabbing women on the street, anyone they see and hugging them and kissing them There were a couple girls that got in a fountain and stripped off all their clothes standing naked in all this water. It was just ridiculous I guess there were windows broken and all kind of things were happening Everybody was so happy I stayed in and I guess it is just as good because a lot of the big plate glass windows in the stores were broken, all kinds of things like that. It was interesting I would not want to change one thing in my life if I could do it over again, nothing

- B Is there anything you would like to add?
- H No, except I found an article or a little quote I have a habit of cutting out little poems and things I have a box I am going to leave to Greg that over all these years I have seen them and cut them out I asked him once if I could have him put them into a book for me. He said, "Sure" Then I decided I would leave a lid on it for him to have it It covers everything I cut them out wherever I saw them I spent at least an hour going through the thing I enjoyed those very much Each part of my life has been interesting as far as I am concerned To somebody else it would not be, but we are all different I do not think I would change anything
- B I want to thank you for the interview today and down the road you will be getting a written copy of it You could add some stuff or take some stuff out if you have to Thank you very much

End Of Interview