

Eve Adams

(June 15, 1891 - winter 1943/1944)

This essay was written by Pink Triangle Legacies Project Founder Dr. Jake Newsome and is based on the important research of Jonathan Ned Katz. Thank you for your work in preserving queer history.



“Eve Zloczower,” as Eve Adams spelled her original Polish surname on a passport photo from 1941. *Ben Reitman Papers, University of Illinois at Chicago Archives*

In the spring of 1891, Chawa Zloczewer (June 15, 1891 – winter 1943/1944) was born into a Jewish family in Poland. She immigrated to the United States when she was 20 years old. On June 4, 1912, after a nine-day voyage, she disembarked in New York City. The English version of her Polish name was Ewa, but upon arrival in the US, she began using the name Eve because she believed it sounded more American. Several years later, she began using the last name Adams. Historian [Jonathan Ned Katz](#) believes that this new name she chose may have been a witty reference to the fact that she was a gender bending woman who loved women. Eve Adams was a play on Adam and Eve.

By 1919, Eve began traveling around the United States selling anarchist, socialist, communist, and radical labor publications. Years later, Eve stated, “What a price I paid for my courage and perhaps foolishness!” Her politics drew the attention of the authorities, and eventually Eve was put on the Radical Activities Index of the US Bureau of Investigation, led by [J. Edgar Hoover](#). Eve lived in Chicago from 1921 to 1923. While there, she co-managed a tearoom called [The Grey Cottage](#) with her partner, Ruth Norlander. The tearoom was known to be a safe haven for political leftists, authors, artists, and folks whose sexuality and gender existed beyond mainstream society’s norms.

In November 1923, Eve moved back to New York City, where she submitted a Declaration of Intention to become a United States citizen. In 1925, she opened a tearoom called [Eve’s Hangout](#). She also wrote a book titled *Lesbian Love*, which told stories that she had heard or experienced during her travels. She changed the names of everyone in the book to protect them from social repercussions, and she only ever distributed a limited number of copies.

In 1926, Eve was arrested for publishing the book and charged with distributing obscenity and for allegedly attempting to have sex with the undercover policewoman who was sent to entrap her. She served 18 months in prison. After her release, the US government deported Eve back to Poland in December 1927. The Daily News newspaper reported that “The morals of this 35-year-old woman...were not what this country demands of a would-be citizen.”

In 1930, Eve moved to Paris, and she met a Jewish woman from Switzerland named Hella Olstein in 1933. Officially, Eve was employed as Hella’s governess, hired to take care of her house. But it was well known that Hella and Eve were a couple.

After the outbreak of World War II, Eve tried to find a way out of Europe. She wanted to return to the US or to join her brother in Palestine, but the costs and paperwork required proved to be insurmountable. Switzerland denied Hella’s request to escape Nazi-occupied France. In 1940, Eve and Hella moved from Paris to southern France hoping to escape the Nazis.

On December 7, 1943, authorities arrested Eve and Hella as “foreign Jews.” Ten days later, the Nazis deported them to Auschwitz in a cattle car, along with approximately 850 other Jews. Upon arrival, 345 people were selected for forced labor. 505 were immediately murdered in the gas chambers. At liberation in 1945, there were only 31 survivors of that transport still alive. Eve and Hella were not among them.



Eve Adams (right) and Hella Olstein (left);
place and date unknown.
Daniel Olstein Collection

Sources & Further Reading

Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Daring Life and Dangerous Times of Eve Adams*. With the original text of *Lesbian Love*. Chicago Review Press, 2021.

NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, “Site Visit with the Author of The Daring Life and Dangerous Times of Eve Adams,” YouTube video (July 19, 2022)

Learn more about Eve **online** and watch the video on **YouTube**. For more LGBTQ+ Stories from Nazi Germany, visit pinktrianglelegacies.com/stories.