

-TITLE- GERMAINE BELLINE
-I_DATE-
-SOURCE- CHRISTIAN RESCUERS PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY- FAIR
-IMAGE_QUALITY- GOOD
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

1:00 Germaine was born in Louviere, Belgium in a small town in July 23, 1908. 3 brothers and 3 sisters. Youngest girl. Her father died in 1915 in World War I.

2:00 Mother worked as a cook. She was a widow with 6 children.

3:00 Germaine went to part of high school, and worked at an early age to help her mother. She also worked as a proof reader at a news paper. Worked at 14 or 15.

4:00 Married at 17 in 1925. Met husband at a dance after the war. Liliane was first child. Liliane's grandmother adopted 2 young Jewish boys, Charles and Simon.

5:00 The grandmother took care of the two boys.

6:00 Husband used to be a tailor. Someone said that they would arrest Charles. Husband was a prisoner for 2 years. They didn't know what Jews were.

7:00 City Hall officials would help Jews escape from being arrested. Names would be changed. 30 people escaped. They came back from Africa.

8:00 People had Polish accents. Left Africa because of health reasons. Said they were Flemish which explained their accents. Liliane was 14 at this time.

9:00 Didn't know what Jews were before the war. Didn't know Charles and Simon were Jewish. Germaine was scared once she knew that they were helping Jews, but they chose to do the good and help the people out.

10:00 Germaine's mother was a "rebel" they said. That's one reason why they housed Jews. Liliane seems to be a bit annoyed by Germaine's storytelling.

11:00 Mother was never afraid of everything so they said. In Europe, families were very dependant on father.

Mother would stand up to him constantly when he was a male biased pig. She felt it was right.

12:00 Soldiers told mother to stop, but she didn't because of her kids. Very bold, didn't like injustice. If the right cause is present nothing can change Germaine's mind.

14:00 Liliane thinks Germaine is vain in what she did to help the Jews. She could cry more now than then. She feels she didn't do enough to help. Some of her friends got killed.

16:00 U.S.A. was very safe to Liliane in comparison to Europe during the war. Left Belgium to come to America because of marriage.

18:00 Liliane's surrogate father got killed in a concentration camp.

20:00 Whole family came to the U.S. together in 1948, was hard for them to leave. Liliane's brother Frances Bleane was #1 test pilot in America.

22:00 They were in Douglastown. Dr. Lowe helped Germaine but he was in hiding.

24:00 A girl's father didn't like their friend Jackie because he was seeing his daughter, so he denounced Jackie to the Gestapo. Couple weeks later Jackie was captured and killed by the Nazis. Dr. Lowe was looking for Jackie. Dr. Lowe went to Belgium to find Jackie's denouncer and Liliane never found out what happened. Doesn't want to know. Dr. Lowe wanted to kill this man.

26:00 Germaine's husband worked in the underground. 30 survivor's they helped, one's that are still alive they still talk to, Germaine and Liliane talk at the same time about different things. Lil started to learn Yiddish by the end of the war.

28:00 Germaine felt useless after the war was over. Felt like she had no purpose. Wasn't taking care of anyone, she felt unhappy. She felt happier when she did things.

30:00 Looking out for #1 wasn't the way they thought back then. Taking care of others was what life was about to them.

32:00 Lil's kids found it hard to get along with other kids because the cultures were different.

34:00 Tells what kids are doing now. Kids find it hard to understand other cultures.

36:00 Ben from the American Army thought Germaine could have been rich by helping Jews. Talk about night life and smoking in clubs in America.

38:00 After coming back from partying, they were scared b/c of the Germans. Germans came into their house to take things. Germans left when they saw Liliane half naked. I guess they felt rude.

40:00 Lil met Musilini. She calls him an "infamous Bastard." Had fun once in a while which saved them from dying.

42:00 They had good times after the war also.

44:00 Lil's ex-husband had a disease that made him look/appear like he was dead.

46:00 Lil thinks the Holocaust is very terrible.

48:00 Would want kids to know a "nice warm anecdote" about the Holocaust. She wanted to form a list to tell the kids b/c too horrible to think about all those things right now.

50:00 American children should know the value of food. Food was priceless during Holocaust. Lil thinks that throwing food away is repulsive.

52:00 Germaine doesn't like what she is seeing in the world now. She doesn't excuse the people who didn't help those in need. The children of the rescuers values have changed.

45:00 Seeing someone die by being repeatedly thrown on the floor changes one's views on life. Makes you more leery of people but they don't think that people are bad. They think that the Holocaust could happen in America, it takes one crazy person in power to start it.

56:00 Germaine has problems trusting people. Has trouble talking about rescuing the people b/c it may hurt them now. She thinks about the war a lot now.

58:00 Sometimes the sirens in America remind her of Germans coming to get more Jews. For a long time Germaine wanted to forget about the war/Holocaust. She didn't want to give interviews when they got to America. They thought at last, it's o.k. to like Jews.

1:00 Liking Jews was against the law during the war. Germaine was religious while growing up, though she is not a church goer.

1:02 Lil still suffers from metaphysical despair.

1:04 Germaine prays till this day to make the world better. She prayed during the war also.

1:06 Lil talks about language and linguistics. Many cultures have many different definitions of man.

1:08 Chinese's definition of man doesn't state that you are a person, you are simply part of a whole of the State. Her (Lil) childhood mind influenced what she does now today.

This is an interview with Germaine Belline and her daughter Liliane Gaffney. During the war they lived in Belgium and saved many Jews from the Nazis, including 30 people whom they hid. They are special because they were Christian rescuers and despite the levels of Anti-Semitism that surrounded them they remained unbiased. They moved to the United States together in 1948. Today Germaine is not working and her daughter Liliane is married with four adult children. In addition Liliane was and may still be a teacher of some sort.

01:00 I was born in Louviere, Belgium in 1908 on July 23. It was a small town. There were three boys and three girls in my family. I was the next to youngest.

02:00 Her father died in World War One, in 1915. Her mother had the most influence on her, she was a wonderful person. She worked as a cook.

03:00 Her mother was a widow with six children. But she didn't want to remarry. She was charitable.

04:00 She went to part of high school. She worked very early at a newspaper, it helped her. She was a proofreader for the paper.

05:00 She was 15 when she went to work. She even worked at night after school. She married when she was 17, in 1925. Her husband was from another town.

06:00 (Liliane) Her grandmother took in two Polish Jewish boys. She took care of them, not really adopted them.

07:00 The boys didn't live in their house. They are still friends today. One lives in Tel Aviv, Israel and the other in Boston.

08:00 In 1938 and 1939 a lot of emotional sentiment fermented, in Belgium and France. Liliane didn't know what Jew was. Her father was a prisoner of war for two years in Munich. In 1941 they started arresting Jews often and the Jews were disappearing.

09:00 Germaine feared the two boys would be arrested. They were aware of the disappearances of Jews. Papers were provided to free Jews.

10:00 It came to Germaine's mind to ask someone to erase the name of her sister and brother in law. She gave some people papers and wanted them to live unknown and be safe.

11:00 Germaine's sister was in Africa so another woman posed as her to be safe. 30 people were saved and hidden.

12:00 They went to a house to hide. It was French. They had to try to explain the inhabitants Polish accents, because they were in French speaking areas.

13:00 They had regular working papers and ration stamps. Liliane was 14 when this was happening. Germaine was unaware that Charles and Simon were Jewish.

14:00 Their family didn't know any Jews. They didn't care what religion people were, they helped people who needed it. She admits that it was a risky situation during the war but they chose to do good work.

15:00 Some people were too afraid to help other people. Others didn't want to live with German occupation. They were able to help others because they weren't afraid. Liliane says her mother is a rebel, afraid of nothing.

16:00 Germaine tells the story of when she was a little girl and the Doctor came in to see her. Her hair was standing straight up because she was so mad and rebellious.

17:00 There was a time period when women were dependent upon the males. Germaine says her husband was sexist but she stood up to him. Germaine tells the story of when a German soldier ordered her to stop and she refused to obey his orders.

18:00 Liliane was always a rebel as well. They can't stand injustice. Liliane says she can become violent if there is great injustice. Liliane says no one can change her mothers mind, and she inherited her rebelliousness.

19:00 Her father was an intellect, he pondered the meaning of life and whether there was a God. She inherited intellect from her father. Germaine says that having saved people she can sleep better at night.

20:00 After the war when Germaine was in the States she met a Doctor who hid in the town of her husband. They talked about the war even though she never wanted to talk about it before.

21:00 People couldn't understand why she didn't want to talk about the war. Finally for humanity and Justice as people had said she talked about the war. For avenues of justice she began to speak about the war and her experiences.

22:00 When asked if she did enough Germaine responds that she could have done more. She doesn't think she did enough and knows some that got killed.

23:00 Liliane discusses her memories as a teenager during the war. She was at an impressionable age when she came to the States, everything was safe, there were no machine guns and enough to eat.

24:00 Liliane couldn't stand the States at first. She lived in Douglass town, New York 24 years ago. She left Belgium because she married a United States G.I. She was impressed with him because her father kept her on a "leash" She had one younger brother.

25:00 She started University before she was 16 years old. When she first met her husband he was reckless and a cowboy. Her fathers friend said that when her dad was in Germany he would take his place intellectually and become her surrogate father. This surrogate father went into a concentration camp.

26:00 He told her that if he didn't come back she was to go to America for him. He didn't return, so she came to America for him. They all came together, they sold the business in 1948 and came to the United States.

27:00 Germaine came to U.S. with out speaking any English. She worked in a factory and her son became the number one test pilot in America. He developed a double hernia so he couldn't do as much as an astronaut.

28:00 The son is now in Singapore with a defense manager. He was also in Israel for four years, he was friends with Moshe Dayan and Henry Kissinger.

29:00 Liliane was in Douglass town and her son was once sick so she took him to see the Doctor next door who became her mothers friend. When Germaine became ill with diverticulitis he took care of her.

30:00 To cheer her mother up when sick, Liliane sang a song from the war back in Belgium. The Doctor heard her and came in to ask her about it because he recognized it. It was the song that her friend sang once in a bar with Germans around-this was foolish because the song was in English and Hebrew and could provoke the Germans.

31:00 But the Germans never realized it. This boy dated a girl that Liliane knew whose father was a collaborator. The father disapproved of his daughter to go out with the boy so he reported him to the Gestapo.

32:00 It turns out that the boy was killed and he was the cousin to the Dr.Loewy taking care of Germaine. Dr. Loewy even went to Belgium to find the collaborator and try to kill him.

33:00 Germaine responds that there were other people who helped save Jews. Her husband was in the underground and her sister also helped Jews, and another woman also. She admits there was danger involved.

34:00 30 people were hidden during the war and they stayed in touch.

Some were in Israel some were in America. Germaine talks about a

time when she helped a Jewish woman who feared going into the hospital to get her baby because she looked so Jewish.

35:00 Germaine tells the story of a woman who could speak only Polish and Yiddish. From being around this woman Liliane became fluent in Yiddish.

36:00 At the end of the war they didn't want to tell Liliane's grandfather about what was going on. He was angry they never told him. He said what a miracle.

37:00 After helping people in the war Germaine had a hard time overcoming a feeling of uselessness. She took care of her grandchildren and keeping busy kept her from feeling useless. She can't wait until there is another baby in the family!

38:00 In addition to Germaine's sense of uselessness, a neighbor died and she wasn't so happy. So she did some volunteer work and was happier.

39:00 Liliane responds to why do people do things to help other people by saying that if you don't live for others as well as for yourself it's not worth living. She thinks that younger generations think only of themselves, #1. Even now she says she gets angry, she thinks you can love yourself first but care also for others.

40:00 Liliane talks about how in the 60's children found it hard to find friends because they were a mixed breed, with different cultural backgrounds.

41:00 Liliane says that the 60's generation put the accent on me, me, me and her children didn't respond well to that. But they are doing quite well today. Chris is in charge of Time Life Operation in Tampa, Florida.

42:00 Mark is a representative for Wyman Industries. Michele is a painter and she studies criminology. Charlene has a horse farm and lives in North Carolina but detests.

43:00 Germaine says that her children and grandchildren visit often. She also says that one younger daughter wanted to be a lion tamer. She says that Chris is married.

44:00 Germaine says that she remembers a Jewish boy in the American army who told her that she was stupid for she could have been a millionaire. She says that she would never have helped people for money.

45:00 Liliane responds that the boy was trying to beat her mother. Germaine says that she was shocked. They discuss a deaf and mute girl from Poland, Germaine says that she loved her as one of her own.

46:00 They discuss the fun that they had when they were hiding, they gathered and had a heck of a good time. It was fun and they

write letters today.

47:00 They said that sometimes it was nice but the next day they were scared to death. They tell about the time that the Germans came into their home to look for bicycles and televisions and any radios to take. At the time they were listening to the B.B.C. on the radio.

48:00 Liliane explains that Gustaf the deaf and mute child was sitting next to her and she was pulling up her stockings as two Germans burst into the living room without warning. She says that the men left because they were shocked and upset by seeing her bare leg.

49:00 Liliane tells the story of the last few days of the occupation when the post man came to warn them that they were going to be denounced. When they told their Italian council neighbor this he hid them all. His son was a pianist in Italy and his daughter died.

50:00 Liliane tells the story of when at this mans house she meets Mussolini and she recognized him because he had on a little hat and black cape. They said hello and she went to tell her daddy.

51:00 They talk about how they sang on New Years Eve and a woman sang in Spanish. They said they got very bored because they couldn't go out at night. That's why they both started to smoke, from boredom.

52:00 The interviewer asks if they felt that the best years of their lives were the war years because they felt useful and that they were doing good. Germaine responds positively to the question. She says that they had some fun after the war though.

53:00 Germaine says that she doesn't have the time to go all over to see old friends. She says that one time they had a party and she also went to Israel. A lot of her friends still live in Belgium.

54:00 She doesn't go to Belgium anymore but she went last year to see her sister. Her sister also got a medal from a Jewish organization in Belgium for her work during the war.

55:00 Liliane explains that she has a second husband and she has been married now for 24 years. She is still friends with her first husband. She explains that he has a disease in which he suffers from fatigue and he has fallen asleep when driving and people think he is lazy. He is now 72 years old.

56:00 With age he got better and is remarried with a wife 25 years younger and she is crazy about him. Germaine had a marvelous time in Israel, it was a big party.

57:00 The interviewer asks what they would like children to know about W2 today. The interviewer says that she would like the children to know that there are nice and good people too. And the

story of the rescuers has not been known until recently.

58:00 They tell a story about the little boy Willy whose mother they mentioned earlier (she was the woman too afraid to go into the hospital to get her baby because she looked so Jewish). He was born in 1943 in Brussels.

59:00 Germaine remembers a day when she was taking care of Charlene and she was having a bad day yet had to put on the child's diaper. She didn't see the point, in Europe they don't use them. She said that women in America are shocked to see a baby without a diaper.

01:00 Liliane says that American children need to learn the value of food. She feels that they waste a lot and you shouldn't throw away food. And she feels it is not totally from the war that she feels this way because in France they wrap food as if they are handling gold. Here they just slap it.

02:00 Liliane discusses her feelings on values and how crucial she thinks they are. She teaches Cultural Anthropology.

03:00 The interviewer asks how the war experience changed them. (They speak in French,) and Germaine responds that she doesn't like what she sees going on in the world today.

04:00 The interviewer states that she has had people tell her that the war has made them learn how good and bad people could be. Germaine says that in a way she always manages to excuse things, to find some reason, but not for everything, if people don't help naturally you can't excuse them.

05:00 Liliane explains that she thinks that there is a whole segment of rescuers that have been overlooked, the children because they are the ones whose values were changed a whole lot more. Because the adults were already formed people.

06:00 Liliane had thought that when they met for a conference in Washington with Elie Wiesel that the rescuers and children should get in touch. Because to come against it as a youngster, to see people that have been tortured as she did, it does change your perspective.

07:00 She says that it doesn't mean that you become a cynic and say that people are bad. It does mean that you become more leery. She has many Jewish friends, some in New York that she has something in common with because they get frightened to hear American Jews say that a Holocaust couldn't happen in America.

08:00 Germaine says that it can happen anywhere. It needs a crazy one to start it. That was a crazy one in Germany she says. Liliane says that children should be raised with careful trust in their hearts, otherwise they can't live. She also agrees that it can

happen anywhere.

09:00 Germaine says that something she can't do is to trust anyone right away. She guesses she got that from the war. She is very careful and tries not to hurt anyone, she wouldn't ever hurt anyone.

10:00 When asked if she thinks about the war much, Germaine responds that yes she does, especially when she goes to bed. Sometimes she has nice thoughts but sometimes she can't sleep from being upset. Something else she can't stand is from the time she stopped in Germany.

11:00 She said that when she was in Germany she heard these sirens at the airport that sound just like the ones from the war. She wonders why they use them still. She used to hear that sound at night and go to the window and wonder when it would stop.

12:00 The interviewer asks if in some ways they felt relieved when they came to this country. Germaine explains that for a long time people didn't know, and they didn't understand why she never told them about the war.

13:00 For a long time Germaine says that she wanted to bury all that. But she says you can't when you feel all that inside. She was glad to let it out and share it.

14:00 Germaine says that her grandchildren learned a lot from this. Liliane says that when she came to the States she was relieved because she thought at last you are aloud to like the Jews! Before it was going against the law, and the society was to obey the government. For children she says this is very strange.

15:00 Germaine says that they took over city hall to make a false paper, and that wasn't considered right, but for the good of the people, why not? They are asked if they were religious in belief when growing up. Germaine responds yes, in belief. She believes but is not a church person. Liliane says that you couldn't even talk about it in those days. When you were 18 you would pick. She says you will not become a bigot beforehand, it was that kind of household.

16:00 Liliane discusses what she did with her children. She says she raised her first two the same, but the last two differently because she was leery. She says if there is one thing she is scared of it is metaphysical despair. She says they may be believers in a general sense but not in a sectarian religion.

17:00 Germaine says that she prays every night for the world to be better all over. Liliane asks her mother if she did that in 1942. She says every night, and Liliane asks why her mother didn't train her to do that. Her mother says that she was a big girl. Liliane says that is typical French culture attitude, at two years old they tell you to

be reasonable.

18:00 Liliane explains that she invented a system of linguistic analysis of major documents. She discusses the contrast between American and French cultures and their declarations (of man and rights).

19:00 She discusses syntax and the different meanings of words in French and in English. She talks about two Chinese students who were analyzing the Chinese Constitution. They decided that it is a Democratic Dictatorship.

20:00 So they looked up the definition of the word people and she explains the definition in Chinese is Socialists involved in the reconstruction of China. It's opposite is enemy. She said these boys cried in her office.

21:00 The boys decided to stay another year and the one was allowed to but the other was not allowed to stay, and he was sent back. She suspects it is because they had supervisors watching them and checking what they did. She didn't want to get them in trouble.

22:00 When asked if her childhood led Liliane to do the work she does she responds yes, from being involved with different groups and observing their ways of thinking. The structure of cultures fascinates her. She says she wanted to be an anthropologist and her son graduated as one but became an expert in computers.

23:00 Liliane says that the psychoanalyst is Francis Grossman. She then goes on to say that she has divided her life up into five year segments. The first five years went to anthropology and the second five to religion. She is one of the few people who has ever enjoyed reading the Talmud she says. She says she is a real mystic.

24:00 The interviewer and Liliane discuss faith. She asks if at the time of the war they felt that they would be successful in their efforts to help the other people and if they would live. Germaine says yes and that she is very happy about that. She says that she sensed during the war that the Germans would loose.

25:00 She tells the story of when her house was destroyed and she wanted to complain but she was told she would loose. She felt that it was justice and she had to complain. She asks why be afraid?

26:00 She says that she doesn't think that she is a brave woman, she doesn't feel happy if she doesn't have something to do. (Both women begin to talk at the same time, conversation).

27:00 Conversation

28:00 Liliane says when you go along with anything whether it is right or wrong you might as well be an unthinking animal and that is what you are. The interviewer says that very few people have the strength and compassion to do as she and her mother have done.

29:00 Conversation

30:00 Liliane says that they have a very strong sense of family and it is also important for your children to develop a sense of family.

31:00 Conversation

32:00 Germaine talks about a time when her husband came back on the train and some small boy was unscrewing parts of the railroad. They say that Francis was only seven.

33:00 Germaine remembers a time when she went back to Belgium and a Jewish man hiding with them got a letter from the Germans that he was to be deported to Germany in 1944. She lied to the man about work permits in order to help this man, and he did help.

34:00 Conversation

35:00 Conversation

36:00 Germaine says she wishes the whole world would get better and that is all she wishes. When asked if she thought the world would get better after the war she responds yes. She thought that it would change for the better. But she says that things didn't change too much, because still so many things are going on in the world.

37:00 Liliane says that at the time she came to America the American dream was a lot more evident than it is today. She says she was a militant unionist in those days. She says that in working with graduate students she has seen that the American dream has become not laughable but they take the cynical approach to it more often than not.

38:00 Liliane says that she had such high hopes for this democracy but at this point she is a little disenchanted and thinks as a whole that we don't deserve a democracy yet. She thinks it is a decadence in moral values too.

39:00 The rest is conversation.
.END.