

-TITLE- DONADIELLE, MARC
-I_DATE- JULY 4, 1988
-SOURCE- CHRISTIAN RESCUERS PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY- FAIR
-IMAGE_QUALITY- GOOD
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES- ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

01:00 [interview preparation]

02:00 He was born in 1911 in St. Croix Vallee francaise (ph).

03:00 [He spoke in French.]

04:00 From July to September of 1942, he was in Chambonsin during the deportation of the Jews. He was the middle of three brothers. One of them died in the war. The other is still alive. The majority of people in St. Croix are Protestant. His father was a pastor.

05:00 His family was very religious. His ancestors were persecuted for being Protestant. Louis XIV persecuted his ancestors in the region he is from during the time of the "War of Religions."

06:00 Protestants are people of the Bible and the Bible tells you not to persecute people for their religion or race. It was not only because of his family's persecution that he identified with the Jews but also because of his religious beliefs. He studied to be a pastor in Geneva and Strassbourg. He went to St. Preval de Vallon a Luzern.

07:00 He was pastor in Cevennes from 1935-1945 at St. Preval. during all of this time, he wrote little bits of his novel but at this time he did not get anything published.

08:00 He reiterated that it was because of his convictions and not simply his family's sufferings that rendered inadmissible the persecution of people for race or religion. In 1935 in Cevennes, he spoke from the pulpit about anti-Semitism that was going on in Germany he got more information about Germany in Geneva from Swiss papers than he did in French papers. In his parish, he would tell people what he read about.

09:00 He discovered the existence of Jews in Nimes when he was in high school. There were many Catholics there so he identified with the Jewish group because they were a small group as were the Protestants.

10:00 His father was a well respected pastor and well-liked. He was gentle. He left his house at 13 to go to high school. When he was 18, his father died. He was a boarder at School.

11:00 His mother was Swiss-German when she came to France and got married she couldn't speak French that well. During 1914, people thought she was German because of her language problem. They couldn't be prejudiced against the pastor's wife, though. His parents influenced him but after he went to school he only visited on vacations. He attributes wanting to become a pastor to his father.

12:00 He used to follow his father when he went to preach in different places. When he was 7 or 8 years old, he would follow his father on foot for 7 kilometers.

13:00 He saw how his father dealt with the people and how his father was well-liked. He was impressed by the comfort his father could bring to people. This gave him the desire to be a pastor.

14:00 His mother brought him up well. During WWI, his grandfather was old and he kept an eye on the family because his father had been sent to fight in the war. His grandfather planted trees in the forest as a service to his country. He was a kind man.

15:00 His grandfather died when he was 10. The first year he went to high school his grandmother died. They were country people and like country people they helped their neighbors.

16:00 In the village of Cevennes, the Catholics were a small majority and therefore there were no problems. The only problem with Catholics occurred in cities where they were a larger majority. In Nimes, the majority were Catholics. The Protestants, though held high positions in Nimes. Out of 80,000 people, 12,000 were Protestants.

17:00 A large number of Protestants were at his high school especially in his Latin and Greek classes. Other classes were half Jewish and half Protestant. He thought this was peculiar. His older brother Rene was sick. He replied and fixed watches and jewelry because he was unable to go to school

18:00 His younger brother went to work on the railroad where he rose to the position of director.

19:00 The train was the main mode of transportation during the war. Everything went by train especially important messages. The Jews as well went to Chambon (ph) by train. This was considered part of the resistance. His brother was responsible for many of the Jews going to Chambon.

20:00 The Jews were people of the Bible. At that time, It was forbidden for Catholics to read the Bible. The Jews and Protestants were akin in that they read the bible in the eyes of God, they were responsible for our lives in front of God. The Catholics looked to the priest for direction not the Bible. The priest was the authority figure. It was a mentality they had. They were responsible for their own lives. The Catholics were not adults, they obeyed the priest. In high school, Protestants were the ones persecuted because they were the ones "in error."

21:00 In 1702 in Cevennes, the Catholics revolted against the authority of the priests. They changed the rectory into a prison and they tied people there to torture benches. The Catholics of the North were not a problem because they were very similar to the Protestants; this was told to him by a Catholic history professor.

22:00 Because Catholics were like the Protestants there, they helped the Jews. Whereas, the Catholics in Vichy collaborated with the Germans. He got married in 1935. The couple settled in Cevennes in St. Preval de Vallon a Luzern (ph).

23:00 All the pastors in Cevennes were very aware of the anti - semitism in Germany. His wife was a charming woman. She shared his ideals. She was anti-Nazi as the Swiss were. She born in Geneva but her ancestors were French. His mother in law was French.

24:00 In Cevennes, the people were very against the persecution of Jews in Germany. He was familiar with the man who was secretary-general of the Ecumenical Council of Churches of Switzerland. En route to London and the United States, he shared precise information on Germany with him. So, through, the Swiss he found out about the anti-Semitism. The man's name was Viso Toft (ph). He was a friend of his. They knew the information and they passed it along to their people.

25:00 He told the parishes which was easy to do. Everyone passed on the information. The civil as well as church leaders were the same people so this facilitated the passage of information. Everyone was in agreement.

26:00 There were no Jews in Cevennes. He was in contact with the Simad (ph) which was an organization that helped refugees primarily from Alsace. Simad was created by Madeleine Barot (ph) who was a Protestant. She went to the camps of Goerse (ph).

27:00 She helped people by buying them food and she comforted them. Many of these people were Jews. She helped them find homes. There were many refugees from all over including Jews from Germany.

28:00 There were 150 people who were not happy at the camps. The set up some "maison d'accueilles," or welcoming houses in the Chambon (ph). There were 100 Jews out of the 150 people. He was in charge of the Jews The director was too concerned with the material things and she asked him to care for the people.

29:00 At this time, his wife was away in Geneva to see her family. It was during one of his vacations that he was asked for help. His parishioners knew what he was doing. They were sympathetic to his work.

30:00 In 1943 the Vichy government came to his house but he wasn't there. They interrogated his wife. They were in danger but they did not think about it much. He was gone at the time for medical help for an intestinal problem.

31:00 When they came to his house, they did not notice that he had a special room for making fake papers. The mayor would sign the papers. Everyone in the area was in accord. When the police came in the house, the neighbor was playing the radio with the English station very loud which was forbidden.

32:00 His wife told the police that they did not want to listen to the Vichy station. The policemen asked if she was against the government and for DeGaulle. She responded, "Yes, everyone is." The people were not afraid. They held strongly to their beliefs.

33:00 Manet was a pastor in Aix-en-Provence. It was here that many Jews were saved. Manet hid the Jews until, he was contacted by Manet to bring the Jews to Cevennes. They were put in different houses in Cevennes.

34:00 He would get a message from Manet to pick up 12 "packages" and he knew what it meant.

35:00 His oldest child was born in 1936 and he understood what was going on at the time. People in the area kept it a secret but it was known. It was obvious that when he arrived with 12 people who could not speak French that something was about. Many of the Jews were hidden in abandoned houses.

36:00 There was certainly enemies around but not in his three communities. People were talking on the train once about a pastor who was hiding Jews. It was him, of course, but he didn't acknowledge it. He only told them that they should quiet because they will only get him in trouble.

37:00 [The interviewer and Marc discussed a time to complete the interview.]

38:00 They were always anxious during this time. They were worried. They did keep Jews in their house. A young girl helped raise his children and they still maintain contact with her. She now lives in America. A whole family that he had in his house now live in Israel. Once they accepted the risk, they never questioned or doubted what they were doing.

39:00 He never counted how many he saved but an historian in Aix-en-Provence says he hid more than 80. He also helped about 100 Jews in Chambor (ph).

40:00 It was a time that he felt useful but it was a very difficult time. He had seven children. His wife was wonderful. She died in the 1980's Recently, he went to a Jewish festival where he helped interpret Pierre's film about saving the Jews. He was never arrested nor stopped.

41:00 A person who was a head of the resistance could not believe that he was never arrested. He was watched but never arrested. It does not cause him any pain to think about it. He like to concentrate on happy times. There were some people who were not reasonable and this led to their arrest.

42:00 The question about how to tell children about the Holocaust was a difficult one to answer.

43:00 The Vichy government collaborated because there was anti-semitic feelings in France. For many, it did not matter, others were in favor of Hitler, and many others were simply afraid.

44:00 His children think what he did was good. There are always people who need help. The disciples of Le Pen (ph) still have not learned anything about the war. He heard a woman a few days ago shout, "Let's get rid of the Jews once and for all!" For young people, WWII is like ancient history.

45:00 [They looked over paper with the interviewer.]

46:00 The best way to teach children is to have a commemorative day for the Holocaust like they do with events in the Bible.

47:00 He got a medal at a ceremony in Israel in 1981. He made contact with many people that he had saved. He planted a tree in Israel. His wife died in 1981.
.END.→