

**Interview with Ms. Jacqueline RIBOT (née SARFATI),
on December 24th, 2014, Paris, France**

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1 hour 14 minutes 47 seconds

Jacqueline Sarfati was born on December 23, 1936 in Marseille, France, to Simon Sarfati and Jeanette (or Georgette) Sarfati, née Rouard. Her paternal grandmother, Oro Bessudo was from Constantinople and arrived in Marseille in 1908. She married Avram Sarfati there in 1909 and they had 5 children. Her maternal grandparents were from a small commune near Marseille, Vitrolles. Her maternal grandmother's maiden name was "Baron" and Jacqueline thinks they may have been marranos, "conversos" or "anusim".

Simon's father died when he was 15 and he had to leave school and take over his father's store, "Au dépôt du Puy (or Puit?)", which sold lace, to support the family. Against his mother's wishes, he married Jeanette, who he met at one of Marseille's popular dancehalls, "La Splendide", in a civil ceremony.

Jacqueline describes her childhood memories and also relates facts that she learned later on.

During the early part of the war, Marseille was under Italian occupation. It was not until November, 1942, that things changed, when the Germans took over the previously "unoccupied" zone, south of the demarcation line. Apparently, Simon Sarfati knew other shop owners and found ways of supplying the family with food. Jeannette Rouard's brother lived in Marseille, too. Jacqueline mentions family outings in the countryside at *Louvecs* and showed me a photo from 1941 with a man who was a "navigator", or ship's captain, and brought back green coffee beans from Africa, a rare commodity.

Jacqueline's brother was born in 1942.

When Simon Sarfati and his two married sisters were arrested in late 1943, Simon was sent to the Prison St. Pierre. It seems that Jacqueline's aunts did not take heed and leave Marseille when their milliner's shop was taken over by an Aryan administrator. One of them insisted upon being given a set of keys so she could continue working there, or take stock of her merchandise. This was probably why they were arrested, at the home of one of the sisters, Victoria Coronel. The two sisters were sent to the Château de la Verdière.

While waiting in line to visit her husband, or perhaps to obtain news of his whereabouts, Jeanette Sarfati learned from another woman that the spouses of Aryans were under a special regime. Jeanette went about obtaining the necessary baptismal certificates for three generations of her family to prove that she was indeed not Jewish. These papers were sent to Drancy, where Simon had been transferred with his sisters and a brother-in-law, Monsieur Coronel, who had not been arrested because he was protected by his Turkish nationality, but had chosen to join his wife. All three were later deported from Drancy and did not survive. Their son, Maurice Coronel, hid behind a door. He later was sent to a children's home called le *Val Joyeux* in the *Alpes-de-Haute-Provence*, near the village of Embrun. After the war, he was raised by his paternal grandparents. He became very active in the association *Vidas Largas*, dedicated to preserving the Judeo-Hispanic language and culture.

Jacqueline's maternal grandmother was probably protected by a neighbor who worked at the Prefecture of Police, a Monsieur Lanfranchi. Her two younger sons, Jacques and Samuel, paid a *passeur* to get them over the Spanish border. They were sent to the internment camp of *Miranda de*

Ebro, but maintained they were Canadians. (It seems that Jacques took the name of “Jacques Broyard”.) The British Consul negotiated their release and they were sent to North Africa. They originally wanted to join General Giraud’s French army, but he was anti-Semitic, so they signed-up with the General Leclerc and later reached England with his Second Armored Division (2ème DB or *Deuxième Division Blindée*) to join the Normandy invasion in early August, 1944. Unfortunately, Simon died liberating Bourget, outside of Paris, on August 26, 1944.

Thanks to this special status of being married to a non-Jew, Simon was sent to one of the **satellite camps of Drancy, Austerlitz**. (See the book by Jean-Marc Dreyfus and Sarah Gensburger, *Des camps dans Paris*, published by Fayard in 2003.) Because he was strong, he was assigned to move pianos out of Jewish homes that were being pillaged. He slept and ate at the Austerlitz site.

Apparently, after Simon’s arrest, Jeanette moved out of the family apartment and lived with her brother for a while, in the *Belle de Mai* neighborhood of Marseille, then moved to Vitrolles with her two children to live with her parents. Jacqueline was enrolled in school there. She mentions that she and her brother were baptized secretly and that she did attend catechism. She longed to wear a beautiful, long dress and flowered tiara for her communion, but the ceremony was held secretly.

Simon Sarfati sent regular letters to his wife, but addressed them to his father-in-law. He did not want his wife being tracked-down by the authorities by her married name and arrested. Jacqueline has kept these.

He did miss his daughter and Jacqueline remembers a special trip to Paris with her mother, another woman whose husband was also interned at one of the satellite camps, and her son, Pierre Weil. Jacqueline visited her father and even got to stay over-night at the Austerlitz site. She describes this during the interview and it must be one of the few occasions that a child was allowed to stay over-night at the camp site.

After the war, Simon returned to Marseille, and recovered his apartment. Jacqueline went on to get her degree at the *Université d’Aix-en-Provence* and married at a Catholic ceremony. She became a high school history teacher until she retired. While preparing a *PAE (Projet d’action éducative)* in 1993 at her school that she and another teacher, Rénée Dray-Besoussan, worked on the period of the German Occupation and the round-up of Jews in the region. It was at this time that she started to delve into her family history. Her father’s letters written while interned in Austerlitz and other documents have been scanned by the French Shoah Memorial. She and her cousin Maurice Coronel are planning to write a book about their family history and wartime experiences.

Proper names of places and people mentioned during the interview

Oro Bessudo Jacqueline’s paternal grandmother

Avraham Sarfati Jacqueline’s paternal grandfather

Simon, Jacques, Victoria, Rosa, Samuel their children

Lycée Saint-Charles near the central train station in Marseille, bombed May 27, 1944

Quartier de la Belle de Mai, rue de la Calamie where Jacqueline’s maternal uncle lived

Rouge Midi a Communist newspaper found at Jeanette Sarfati’s brother’s apartment

Prison Saint Pierre

Château de la Verdière

Camp de Garrigues

Vitrolles small town near Marseille (which has recently voted for Marine Le Pen's party, the *Front National*)

Monsieur Lanfranchi

Village of Pierrevert in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence

rue Adolphe Thiers, 11

boulevard de Longchamp

village de Boussy (or Bussy) in the mountains above Annecy, in the zone occupied by the Italians until November, 1942

Monsieur Zattara a Corsican who worked at the prefecture of police in Marseille and who was later deported