

Name: Nicole De Vizcaya Hylton
Date of Interview: March 11, 1991
Jewish Community Federation of Richmond

- 01:00 Full name: Nicole Marie Claire De Vizcaya Hylton. She was born in Paris, France on March 7, 1921. Her parents got divorced when she was only two years old, so she was raised by her mother. She went to school in a Catholic convent. She began college, but stopped going because of the war.
- 02:00 The war started for her in 1939. She and her mother left Paris and flew to Lupay, a small town in the middle of France, because they were worried that the Germans were getting closer. They stayed there for 6 to 8 months. The Germans also took her step-father prisoner, and they did not know where he was.
- 04:00 The town was located on the way to Avignon. Paris had a large Jewish population, and she and her mother had a lot of Jewish friends.
- 05:00 They returned to Paris, she and her mother, to see what the Germans were doing, and the city was almost empty. There was almost no food, and they starved for two years. All they had was a little bread and some brown noodles.
- 06:00 The black market was established. She would get food here, or she would ride her bike to farms on the outskirts of Paris and get food from them. The Germans began taking Jews from their houses.
- 07:00 Jewish parents would throw their young children out of windows so that the Germans could not get their hands on them. Jewish people were forced to wear Jewish stars. If a Jew and a German were walking together on the sidewalk, the Jew had to get off and walk in the street so that the German would not beat him. They also could not go food shopping with everyone else.
- 08:00 They had to go to the back of the food line. They were dressed shabbily and were always the first ones to get beaten.
- 09:00 One day she saw a German, and he came up to her and started to hurt her. She told him to go away and he started to punch her, so she kicked him hard and took off on her bicycle.
- 10:00 She did not see many incidents first hand. She was raised to hate the Germans, especially since her mother was from the eastern part of France, and that was where Germany always invaded first.

- 12:00 She was involved in the french underground, which began to help Jews escape in 1940. She lived on the ground floor of an apartment building so it was easy. The people usually left her home to go to Spain or England.
- 13:00 She and her mother would give them food and a place to rest. The people who came through her house never gave their names, because if the Germans came asking questions, they would be given away.
- 14:00 She lived in a 3 bedroom apartment with a living room, a dining room, and a kitchen. People generally just stayed overnight. They came from Belgium, Holland, very few from Germany, and Yugoslavia.
- 15:00 People did not talk very much or tell stories.
- 16:00 They were mostly running from the nazis so that they could raise their children decently, even though they had already lost everything. She and her mother managed, but it was hard.
- 17:00 She and her mother were very proud and happy to be able to help, because the hatred of the Jews was so unbelievable.
- 18:00 She was not worried about getting caught, nor was she scared.
Many people came to their apartment because it was so close to the woods.
- 19:00 She belonged to an organization that took care of the wounded and the dead. The father of the boy that she was engaged to was director of a hospital for sick children.
- 20:00 There was a special part of the hospital set aside for the french resistance to help the wounded victims.
Paris was occupied for about 4 years.
Somewhere around 80 to 100 Jews came through their home.
- 21:00 The people were women, children, and young boys, but there were very few older men, because it was harder for them to escape.
During the day she would work for her step-father in his business. He was a German prisoner of war.
- 22:00 In his business he manufactured mechanical pieces, and he also wrote a lot of books that she helped him with, like one on Einstein.
- 24:00 Paris has metal shutters on the windows. The Germans used to pound on the shutters so that they would know to let them in. One time the pounding got really loud, but they were just drunk. A Lutheran priest helped get them to

leave.

- 26:00 People came at all times of night, so Nicole and her mother did not sleep much. They would feed them, play with their children, they tried to make them feel comfortable, and asked to hear their stories. They did not transfer the people though, someone else came, she does not know who, to pick them up.
- 27:00 Her fiancée worked in the resistance too. When Paris was liberated, she met her husband though.
- 28:00 She broke things off with her fiancée because he had been dating a lot of other women as well. Tom, her husband, asked her to move to America a month after they were married, and she decided to go a year later.
- 29:00 Liberation was in 1944 for her. She was listening to the English radio, and heard that the Americans were coming. Everyone ran into the streets and gave the Americans wine to celebrate.
- 30:00 Things were still dangerous because there were still many snipers left. One bullet landed directly next to her foot, and when she picked it up, it was still hot.
- 31:00 She stayed in Paris for a while, but it was a dead season work-wise with the Germans going and the Americans coming. Her step-father came back and went back to business.
- 33:00 She came to America in 1946. Her Jewish friends who had been taken away in the beginning of the war never came back.
- 34:00 The Germans invaded a boys' school one day during the war. They took them outside and made them stick hard flowers in their eyes to blind themselves, and then they dragged the boys away.
- 35:00 She never let the Germans push her around, but she never told them what she thought of them either.
- 37:00 She also worked for the Red Cross. She helped air raid victims, and people who got hurt in the subways. She never had to go to a shelter, even during air raids, so that she could help them.
Her mother did not leave France for a while.
- 38:00 Her mom and step-father lived in Canada until their divorce.
Nicole's husband and children never knew any of this until now.

39:00 She regrets not having done more, but it was because they did not really know what was going on with the concentration camps and the ghettos. They only knew bits and pieces of information from escapees.

41:00 The only person who may still be alive, and might have known about what Nicole and her mother did is the security guard in her building who saw all of the people come in each night.

PHOTOGRAPH:

Picture of her mother taken in 1944--Madeline Marie Antoinette.

45:00 The war affected her a lot. The first time she came to the United States and heard a fire alarm she thought it was an air raid. She had so much freedom, and for the first time in a long time, there was no need to be afraid.

46:00 She went to New York for a week when she first got here, and then went somewhere near Charlottesville, Virginia to see Tom's family. Then they went to West Virginia to meet his parents.

47:00 Her mother came to visit after her first child was born. They stayed in West Virginia for a while so that Tom could go to law school.

48:00 They moved to Richmond, and then moved again to a new job in Chester, and have been there for 33 years. She only went back to France once, when her first son was 16 months old.