

HOLOCAUST ARCHIVE PROJECT

Name of Interviewee	<b>MARGUERITE MORRIS</b>	
Name of Interviewer	Sidney Elsner	Date 11/14/84
Name of Abstractor	Michelle Heyer	Date 6/16/89

**NARRATIVE SUMMARY**

Marguerite Morris was born in Paris to parents who had emigrated to France from Poland. She enjoyed a comfortable childhood, and recalls herself as spoiled and protected. The family kept kosher, but was not orthodox; they lived in a predominantly gentile neighborhood.

As a foreign-born national, Marguerite's father was not required to serve in the French army; however, he chose to enlist. He returned to Paris in October 1940 - the family soon realized this was a mistake; he was sent to Beaune-la-Rolande concentration camp in 1941. Marguerite and her mother never saw him again. He was sent to Auschwitz on the last convoy from France, and he died there of typhus.

The family's home was in the German-occupied zone of Paris. In July 1942, a friend of Marguerite's father, who was the chief of police, warned them that they were on a Nazi list. Marguerite and her mother fled to unoccupied France; those on the list were rounded up and deported.

Marguerite and her mother went first to Limoge, where an aunt's husband was living. However, they could not stay there and eventually found refuge 20 miles away in Oradour. They lived on savings they had brought with them; however, they soon ran out of money. Marguerite returned to Paris to retrieve family valuables they had left with a neighbor. She was taken there by a friend from Oradour who pretended that Marguerite was her daughter.

Marguerite and her mother stayed in Oradour, along with 20 other Jewish families, until liberation in August 1944. After the liberation they went to Limoge, but did not return to Paris until the war officially ended.

Once in Paris, they learned that Marguerite's father was dead. Her mother received government assistance to reopen the family business and Marguerite attended an accelerated school. However, Marguerite was depressed, and it was decided that she should move to America to live with cousin's in Akron. She emigrated easily under the liberal French quota. However, her mother, who also wanted to emigrate, was considered Polish. She had to wait several years for permission to enter the U.S.

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In the U.S., Marguerite studied accounting and began to work for Firestone. She then went to work for the cousins who had sponsored her immigration.

Marguerite eventually married an American who had been stationed at Normandy during the war. After the birth of her two sons, she returned to school and is now a certified public accountant.

**ABSTRACT**

**VIDEO 1 OF 2**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Marguerite Morris was born in France. Came to U.S. at age 17. Was seven when Germans invaded. Lived in Akron after immigration. Married in 1952, moved to Cleveland in 1955. Has two grown sons. Went back to school after children grown, is now a CPA. Was active in Pioneer Women, other organizations. Older son is a doctor in Chicago. Younger son is a financial planner in White Plains, N.Y.

**MARGUERITE'S FAMILY LIVES IN PARIS UNTIL 1942. THEN THEY MOVE TO LIMOGES**

Left when Nazis began rounding up women and children.

**HER PARENTS ARE ORIGINALLY FROM POLAND**

Father came to France in 1924, mother in 1928.

**SHE IS A SPOILED, PROTECTED CHILD**

**FATHER IS IN FRENCH ARMY, THEN IS SENT TO BEAUNE-LA-ROLANDE CONCENTRATION CAMP IN 1941**

Didn't have to serve, but felt an obligation to his adopted country.

**FATHER OWNS A PRODUCE BUSINESS**

**FAMILY'S JEWISH LIFE**

Not many Jews in their neighborhood, but there was a synagogue. The family kept kosher, but was not orthodox.

**FAMILY LANGUAGES**

Spoke French, some Yiddish. No Polish - father despised Poland.

**MARGUERITE DOESN'T REMEMBER ANY PRE-WAR ANTI-SEMITISM**

**MARGUERITE'S EDUCATION**

Went to public school - separate schools for boys and girls. Went to private school after war. Went to Jewish Sunday school after war.

#### THE GERMANS INVADE IN 1940

Marguerite was seven years old. Mother tried to keep in touch with her family in Poland.

FATHER'S FRENCH NAME IS JACQUE. HEBREW NAME IS YAKOV. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME IS ZAK

#### ANTI-SEMITISM IN FRANCE AFTER INVASION

Marguerite began to worry when she had to wear a star. Jews required to register, couldn't own business.

#### FATHER RETURNS FROM ARMY IN OCTOBER 1940

Later realized he should have stayed away - too dangerous in Paris.

#### THE FAMILY LIVES IN THE GERMAN-OCCUPIED ZONE OF PARIS

#### FATHER IS SENT TO BEAUNE-LA-ROLANDE, MAY 1941

Ordered to report to local police station for check of papers. Didn't know it was a trap. Sent to Beaune-la-Rolande. He was treated well, could have visitors.

#### MARGUERITE AND MOTHER LEAVE PARIS IN JULY 1942

#### FATHER IS DEPORTED TO AUSCHWITZ ON LAST CONVOY OUT OF FRANCE

After the war, a survivor told Marguerite he died of typhus in hospital at Auschwitz.

#### THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT PROTECTS NAMES OF FRENCH-BORN JEWS, BUT GIVES LISTS OF FOREIGN-BORN JEWS TO NAZIS FOR JULY ROUNDUP

#### FATHER ASKS POLICE CHIEF TO HELP HIM ESCAPE, BUT HE CANNOT. HE LATER WARNS MARGUERITE'S MOTHER THAT SHE IS ON A NAZI LIST

Mother and Marguerite fled with mother's sister and her son. Another sister fled, but went back, with children, to get clothes. They were caught, but the sister arranged for children to live with their French maid. Maid was anti-Semitic - she brainwashed older boy.

#### MORE ABOUT JULY ROUNDUP OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Germans didn't have permission to deport children, so women and children were separated. Got permission to deport children later, saying they would be reunited with their mothers. Most went to Auschwitz.

ON FATHER'S CONVOY, 987 WERE DEPORTED. 18 SURVIVED

Left France on August 17, 1944. Germans needed trains for military transports, but didn't stop deporting Jews.

MARGUERITE AND MOTHER ESCAPE TO UNOCCUPIED FRANCE

Stayed with Jewish friends in Paris a few days, then with gentile friends. Mother arranged to be smuggled into free zone. They and 25 others wait in a house on border until dark. Their guide wanted Marguerite to stay behind - she had a loud cough. Mother insisted they go that night. Next day, house was raided by Nazis.

THEY GO TO LIMOGES

Aunt's husband was in Limoges, but they couldn't stay.

THEY FIND HOUSING IN A SMALL TOWN, GET RATION CARDS

THEY FIND A HOUSE NEAR LIMOGES

A family from Paris lived with them.

MARGUERITE RETURNS TO PARIS TO COLLECT FAMILY VALUABLES

They had left valuables with a neighbor - needed to sell them for living money. Was willing to go get them, but knew the neighbor would not give them to a stranger. So Marguerite went with her, traveling as her daughter. Germans stopped them once, asked for their papers, but no problems.

MARGUERITE'S MOTHER HAS FORGED PAPERS BUT WON'T USE THEM BECAUSE OF HER ACCENT

MORE ON RETRIEVING THE VALUABLES IN PARIS

ARRIVAL IN THE FREE ZONE

Lived in Oradour, 20 miles from Limoges. Registered for ration cards.

THEY GO INTO HIDING SEVERAL TIMES

Hid with friend who took Marguerite to Paris.

JEWS DO NOT WEAR STARS IN FREE ZONE, EVEN AFTER GERMAN OCCUPATION

#### MARGUERITE GOES TO SCHOOL

Encountered first anti-Semitism. May also have been due to the fact that she was an outsider. Later, didn't want husband to call her Margo because other children teased her with that name.

#### THEY GOT FINANCIAL HELP FROM JEWISH AGENCIES

Mother unable to work. Jewish agencies helped toward end of war.

#### THERE ARE ABOUT 20 JEWISH FAMILIES IN ORADOUR

#### MARGUERITE'S MOST PAINFUL EXPERIENCE IS LOSING HER FAMILY

At end of war, everyone happy, dancing - but Marguerite felt only sadness. Wrote poems - today, re-reading them, she is sad that a 13-year-old could feel so badly.

#### MARGUERITE'S MOTHER KEEPS IN TOUCH WITH FRIEND IN LIMOGE, THEN LOSES TRACK OF HER

#### HELP FROM GENTILES HELPS MARGUERITE NOT FEEL BITTER ABOUT WAR

#### A VILLAGE NEAR ORADOUR IS RAZED BY NAZIS. MARGUERITE THINKS THEY MEANT TO DESTROY HER VILLAGE

Nazis attacked in reprisal for partisans yelling at Nazis. Incident happened in Marguerite's village, but Nazis destroyed a nearby village with a similar name.

### VIDEO 2 OF 2

#### LIBERATION OF PARIS AND LIMOGE, AUGUST 1944

People dancing in the streets. They didn't know what had happened in concentration camps.

#### THEY WAIT IN LIMOGE FOR OFFICIAL END OF WAR, THEN RETURN TO PARIS

#### THEY DISCOVER THAT FATHER IS DEAD

Marguerite had fantasies he was alive, then met a man who told them he was dead.

#### FATE OF OTHER RELATIVES

Never heard official news of mother's sister's death. One daughter of mother's sister or brother survived, came to France.

#### MARGUERITE MOVES TO AMERICA WITH RELATIVES

Marguerite very depressed after war. Cousins visiting from Akron in 1948 suggested she leave Europe.

IT IS EASY TO EMIGRATE BECAUSE THERE IS LITTLE DEMAND FOR FRENCH QUOTA SPACES. MOTHER IS STILL CONSIDERED POLISH, MUST WAIT SEVERAL YEARS TO EMIGRATE

#### LIFE IN PARIS IMMEDIATELY AFTER WAR

Lived in old apartment, all possessions gone. Mother got pension for father's death.

THERE IS RESISTANCE IN ORADOUR, BUT MARGUERITE DOES NOT HAVE CONTACT WITH PARTISANS

#### THEY HEAR BELATEDLY ABOUT INVASION OF NORMANDY

They thought Nazis would never leave Paris without destroying it.

#### MORE ON HIDING

Never actually hid, but would have gone into cellar if Germans were searching for them.

#### MORE ON LIFE IN PARIS

Marguerite went to accelerated school. Mother tried to reopen father's business. Got financial help from French government, Jewish agencies.

COUSINS IN AKRON SPONSOR MARGUERITE. FAMILY NAME IS SACHS.

MARGUERITE ATTENDS BUSINESS COLLEGE, BECOMES AN ACCOUNTANT

Worked for Firestone, then Sachs family business.

MARGUERITE MEETS HUSBAND, ALAN, ONE YEAR AFTER ARRIVAL IN U.S.

He had been stationed with U.S. Army in Normandy.

MARGUERITE RETURNS TO PARIS, FINDS A MONUMENT WITH FATHER'S NAME ON IT

Father's name, mother's sister's name and names of other relatives killed on monument to Poles killed in Holocaust.

MARGUERITE FEELS SURVIVORS HAVE PURPOSE TO FULFILL

Wants her survival to mean something. Very active in Jewish community.

SHE DOES NOT REMEMBER FATHER, BUT OTHERS SAY HE WAS WARM AND GENEROUS

He died at Auschwitz.

MARGUERITE'S MESSAGE

She is not bitter - that will not prevent another holocaust. Jews must be proud and strong, but not isolate themselves from gentiles. That allows others to stereotype Jews.

SHE FEELS HER EXPERIENCE IS UNIQUE - NOT MANY FRENCH SURVIVORS IN CLEVELAND. WANTS TO ADD HER EXPERIENCE TO HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST