

Arlette DeLong

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Arlette DeLong (née Arlette Waldman) was born on June 15, 1937, in Brocourt, France. Her parents, Joseph and Fanny (née Fuchs) Valmont, were physicians. Although her father, from Austria, and mother, from Siberia, did not reveal that they were Jewish, the villagers knew and did not turn them in. Arlette attended Catholic school and had baptism papers. She spoke Russian with her mother and grandparents, who also lived in her home. She had a privileged position as the physician's daughter and was never short of food. She did not experience first-hand danger.

At the end of the war, when Arlette was 8 years old, she and her family hid in the woods from Germans who were collecting everyone. A priest convinced the Germans to let the villagers free. She recalls seeing the Germans surrender to Allied soldiers.

After the war, at 10 years old, Arlette moved to Paris to live with her grandparents. Her parents followed a year later and joined a synagogue. They changed their name from Waldman to Valmont. Arlette opposed and resisted Jewish traditions. She missed Christian rituals and wanted to be like the Christian girls. In 1962, on a visit to the United States, Arlette met her future husband, a Christian. They have two children. Today Arlette has ambivalent feelings about her Jewish identity. At the same time, she feels survivor's guilt.