

PAULETTE MELTZER

Pre-war: Family

Born in 1936 in Paris. Maiden name was Goldstein. Mother's maiden name was Schwartz. Paulette was youngest of three sisters. In 1942 the girls ages were 6, 14, 18. Father was in the French Army.

War: Separation from family

She and Mother transported by bus to Circus tents. Sisters not at home. Father stationed at a prisoner of war camp. Pleaded and finally permitted to leave. Took them to a small camp-converted farm. After a few days a lady with a long black cape came and took her from her mother and after a long train ride delivered her to a Christian friend of her parents.

Meanwhile father was returned to Paris - he had TB. All (except for Paulette) were reunited in family home. Mother arrested and sent to death camp. Father took two daughters and went to look for her as he had received a note from her. Arrested at Vichy and sent to camp. Never saw them again. Yesterday at Holocaust gathering she found their names in large book. Shocking affirmation of their death. Mother not listed so either died before they took her or the records were not complete. During war she thought that parents were in a work camp. Everyong thought that this was true. After war they searched. She was eight or nine. Names of missing people were broadcast on the radio

War: Protection by Christian woman

Paulette stayed with Christian family. Very nice but had no children of her own. Very strict. Saved many Jewish children. Didn't send her to school. Taught her at home. Her first husband had been a professor at the Sorbonne and had many books. Wasn't permitted to read children's books. The woman wanted to adopt her. In 1948 began to take children from Christian families to put with Jewish families. Didn't want to leave her but finally put in Jewish Children's home where the lady came to teach once a week. She had no surviving relatives.

Postwar

Spring, 1953, the Director received a phone call from an aunt in New York who was looking for her and had been looking for her for eight years. Christian woman died of cancer in 1950. Came alone to New York at age 17 by boat. Couldn't speak English well. Aunt was her Mother's sister. Had stories and pictures of her Mom.

Further Memories

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Parents were from Romania originally. All roundups and arrests were done by French police, not German. Remembers sitting in kitchen with Mom and having no food. Jews had to shop at a different time than everyone else. Never much food left. Ate rutabagas many different ways.

Hated concierge in building where she lived. Noone could come or go without her knowing. Reported all Jewish people in building. Doesn't understand why parents didn't move away.

Present Life

Married with two children. Has told them everything. We should never forget. If don't teach children it could happen again.