

### **Interview 5 (file RG-50.219.0005.01.01) – Name unknown**

Born in Paris in 1931. Her parents were born in France, but her father got US citizenship after fighting with the US army in World War I. She had dual citizenship, French and American (US). She had a brother, seven and a half years older than her.

Her father lost his business and emigrated to the US in 1935. Her mother stayed in Paris with the children and worked in Paramount Pictures as a translator.

In 1939, her mother lost her job because the Paramount offices moved to London. The Germans started moving towards Paris and her family decided to go to southern France. They rented a farm with some other people. The farm was in Saint-Selve, SE Bordeaux, and had no electricity, gas or water. The living conditions were hard and her family decided to go back to Paris. In Paris, her mother could not get a job because she was Jewish, and someone in the American Legion – which the interviewee's father had been a member of – advised the interviewee's mother to go to Lisbon and then to the US with the help of the Red Cross. It took the interviewee's mother six months to gather the necessary travel documents. The interviewee's brother was seventeen at the time and wanted to stay in France and join the resistance, but decided to go with her and their mother.

In February 11, 1941, they took a train from Paris to Hendaye, France, at the Spanish border, together with other people who also wanted to go to the US. They could not take valuables with them and informed few people that they were leaving. Someone from the US embassy was traveling with the group. In the train, there was a US priest who belong to the St. Louis diocese and who was openly against the Nazis. He had been asked to return to the US. The priest was very nice to her and they became friends. There was also a WWI veteran accompanied by his 16 year old son, who had had to leave his wife and 3 year old daughter behind and was crying all the time.

Crossing the border into Spain was easy. Spain was devastated and they saw people fighting for a piece of bread. They stopped in Salamanca and stayed in a hotel for one night. They resumed the trip from Salamanca to Portugal by bus.

They arrived to Sintra, Portugal, on February 14 or 15. A representative of the Red Cross was waiting for the group, and put its members in three hotels, one of which was called the Central Hotel. The interviewee and her family spent two months in Sintra, and local people were very kind to them.

Her family took a boat from Lisbon to the US. She and her mother were in a cabin with three other women, and her brother was in a room with 30 men. The trip lasted ten days, and the boat was stopped twice, once by a German submarine and once by a British submarine, which insisted that the boat stop in Bermuda. In April 15, 1941, they arrived in the US. In the fall of that year her family moved to Queens. Adapting was hard for the interviewee and her family. Her parents needed 17 years to pay back the \$662.30 debt to the Red Cross for the trip. The brother joined the US army during the war, and briefly went back to Paris after the war, finding that some relatives and friends had been deported and/or killed. A female first cousin survived the war and died in 1989, but that woman's parents were killed in the war.

The interviewee got married and had three children. She organized some survivors groups at the "Y". She is Jewish but not religious. She does not buy anything German. She only went back to Paris in 1985, after her husband died in 1984.