

## **INTERVIEW WITH MONIQUE GOODRICH**

**April 2, 1992**

**BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS**

The date is April 2, 1992 and we are speaking with Monique Goodrich in Brookline, Massachusetts. Ms. Goodrich, could you tell us your name at the time of the war, your date of birth, your place of birth and anything you possibly can about your family background and your childhood?

I was known as Monique Jackson. I was born in Paris, France. I was born in October 29, 1937. My parents-- my father's name was Charles, he was born in Russia, in Vesitosk (ph) (c.10); my mother was born in Poland. They both emigrated to France when they were young. My father did some studies. They were both orphans of the first World War.

So they met in France?

They met in France, yes. They were pretty young when I was born, I I guess. My mother was twenty years old when I was born. My mother never really had a good family. She was raised, I guess, by her sister. Jeannette, who is dead now, told me that she is the one who took her out of the orphanage because her parents died during the war. I think typhoid. So my mother never knew her parents and she was raised by her grandmother, by her sisters; she was shunted back and forth.

All in Poland?

In Poland and in Paris. My father was more or less the same. He came from a large family and he has more recollection of his parents but he was also orphaned during the war and didn't know his parents. No, he knew them a little bit, he knew more his oldest sister, I think he knew. Her name was Emma; I think she raised him. But he lost his whole family except for a brother that was left in the United States. That's one of the reasons we did come to the United States, because his brother was here, Sam.

You don't know anything about the religious background of the family or anything, do you?

The religion? My father certainly was well-versed in religion. He knew the prayers, there must have been some orthodox. But he didn't practice. He gave up the religion, certainly. I don't know if it was before the war or during the war but I think he gave up all religion.

When he was in Paris, you said he was studying.

He did study some engineering, I think he did, for a while, but then he ran out of money and he had to go to work. He told us lots of stories of how--I guess there were a group of them--they used to run out of money and how they used to try and get the baker to give them some money and how they would take the herring and split it so they could have something to eat. Lots of stories like that.

Do you know anything about your parents' basic education. Did they go to public school system there?

My mother went to public school. My poor father, he didn't know really, Russian. He studied in Yiddish. I don't think he knew Hebrew but he studied in Yiddish. His mother tongue was Yiddish. His mother tongue was Yiddish and he could write Yiddish. Everything else was very difficult. Languages didn't come very easily to him so he came to France, had a hard time with French and when he became a little fluent in French, he went to Spain. He ended up in Spain during the war, in a camp there. So when he became a little fluent in Spanish, he came back to France. From France, he came to this country. My poor father was always speaking in all kinds of different languages.

I see. That's interesting. What can you tell me about your home? Do you remember? Were you extremely young?

Before the war, I do not remember anything because I was two years old when the war started. My earliest recollections are of the little town in the Pyrenees in the south of France in the Medii, Neichtauber called St. Laurent De Neste. This is where I spent quite a few years of the war. Those are my earliest recollections.

Since you can't tell me first hand, can you tell me what happened and how you got there?

In 1939 when the Germans crossed over to France, the family started to go--they wanted to go to the free zone of France. My mother--I forgot the exact story how it went--but she knew someone or somebody told her to go down to the Pyrenees and I think the government helped the mothers and

the children to escape. They escaped, they ended up in the Pyrenees with quite a few members--her sister was there with her family. There were about some twenty persons, I think, some Jewish people who were in that particular town, in that little town, ended up in St. Laurent De Neste. I talked to her last night, she mentioned that they were strafed when they were escaping and they ended up in that small town. They took the train and they ended up--it was about maybe twenty or thirty miles from Towl (ph) (c.62) which is the biggest city.

So when you got there, did the individuals hide people or, what happened exactly?

The French, if you recall, had a corroborating government. Life was very difficult but the town itself was very helpful. My mother always tells the story how they used to make little baskets down there. My mother says I used to go off into this little town and I would come back. Somebody would give me a basket they would put eggs in there or milk and really keep my mother supplied. They were extremely helpful; vegetables--.

There wasn't a huge shortage in these areas, or--?

Not when I was with my mother. I don't remember being hungry, no. It seems that the town really helped my mother and my father survive; the other people who were there also.

Do you remember what it looked like?

Absolutely, yes.

Give me any possible descriptions that you have and be as specific as you like.

The town was a beautiful little town. I remember it; it was imbedded in my mind. I could never forget it. As a matter of fact when we went back there, about ten years ago, my husband and I, I took him exactly to where it was. Because it was in the Pyrenees and because it was so close to the Spanish boarder, there was a sort of like a Spanish flair to it.

Did they speak Basque there?

Yes, some of the people spoke Basque. As a matter of fact, I spoke Basque, I learned a tongue down there that was Basque--very Spanish. But I forgot it all, unfortunately. The reason I forgot it all is because there's a definite southern accent to France. When we went back to Paris after the war, I was really made fun of so I dropped it as quickly as I could. It was like all small towns whether they be French or whether they be Spanish, they have what they call a *plass* (ph.) (c.88) which is the center of the town. There's usually the churches, the town hall, very similar almost to the American town. From that *plass* radiates all the streets of the town. In the center of town, there was also a building where the people used to put hay. I remember they used to stack hay there and we used to play in there and have fun. The smell of hay was just incredible.

You played with just the regular kids?

Yes, as a matter of fact, Zhebair(ph) (c.92) was one of them and he is in one of those pictures there. I found them afterwards. We had a house that was a three story house, very primitive, actually. All the houses were built; they were at least hundreds of years old with very, very thick walls. The main room would be where there would a coal stove and then the bedrooms upstairs. That's where we lived and on top of the house was a huge balcony. It wasn't as big as I remember because I was a small girl and everything seemed big but from the top of the balcony, you could see the Pyrenees, the mountains. It was very pretty, I used to play up there a lot.

Did the people in the town--I assume they knew you were Jewish?

I think so. As you will see, they knew that we were Jewish.

Your brother wasn't born then?

No.

So you slept---

Well, as I begin to unfold the story, you will see what happens. We lived in this little town. It was in the free zone but it was not really that safe. We never really knew who was collaborating and if my father would be denounced. After a while, the mayor, Mr. Couquebert, who had two daughters, helped my mother. She was friendly with his wife. The whole family was friendly and he told her that the day they would come for my father that he would let her know. He had to be very careful

because again there was a collaborating government. As things began to be very difficult, there was in these old buildings, they had, since there was no refrigeration, they had like a closet, a very thick closet where they would keep the goods. You know, the butter and the perishables and it would keep them quite cool. My brother was born in '41 so this was about '42, '43 maybe, when it became--my mother didn't want people to know that my father was in the house. He would stay in the house but anytime anybody would come to the house, he would go into that little closet. They had put an armoire in front it and he would hide there. But my brother would call, "Pa-pa, pa-pa" back there, so it became very difficult for him to hide. Across the street, there was like a barn, nothing like a barn that you would think of now, but like an old building where the animals would be kept. My father very often would go there during the day or at night and hide there so he wouldn't be home. My mother tells me that the Germans did come into the town one time. I was at my little friend's house. Her father had trucks which of course could not be used that time because they didn't have gasoline. We would play in the trucks and they had put some swings there and we'd swing. One day the Germans came in and they routed all the men. There were some that were Mackee (ph)(c.138), the Resistance. We were very scared. I was very, very scared at the time. They killed, they rounded up and some of them tried to escape and they rounded up the ones who tried to escape, they were shot. There was the father of the baker was shot dead and a few others were shot. They put all the men in this la plasse (c.141) where I told you where there was a building where people could get together. They let them go after a while.

Did you have a sense--at this point did you understand anything that was going on, a sense of the danger?

There was a sense of danger but I really didn't understand what was going on. As the hidden children understood, we knew instinctively that we couldn't call attention to ourselves, that we had to be very good and obey and do what we were told to do. Because after a while, my mother felt that it was too dangerous. She talks about the brown Jews coming around and telling them to hide the children, at least to save the children if they couldn't save themselves. So I ended up in a convent for a while with the sisters. That was a very miserable time.

How old were you?

I was four.

Do you remember this?

Very distantly, yes.

Do you want to talk about it at all?

Yes, I can talk about it because I did go back and visit. Some of the horror was worked out. They had an orphanage, they ran an orphanage there and so I was just a member of the children in the orphanage. It was very, very regimented. You got up at a certain hour and you went in the chapel and prayed. You ate at a certain hour and you went to the bathroom at a certain hour and a four-year-old child, it was very difficult besides being away from my parents.

You knew that they were still there?

My parents?

Yes. Or did you--?

Hard to say. Hard to say what I felt. I think what happened is that I sort of withdrew into myself. The only thing that I remember vividly is having to go to the bathroom all the time and not being able to go and being very, very afraid at night. Again I would have to go to the bathroom and I was afraid to get up and go.

I'm sorry we couldn't let you go when you got here.

That's okay. I was scared, I was always scared. I always knew that there was danger and I didn't know what the danger was. Being away from my parents was also very--. You knew, instinctively that there was danger because my father was hidden. I was shushed, I'm sure, all the time. There was danger, it was imminent at all times and I didn't know why.

Did the nuns know that you were Jewish?

I don't know. I'd have to ask my mother if they knew. My mother says I didn't stay very long. To me, it seemed like a very long time. But when I back to visit them, to visit about ten years ago, that was the last stop I made because that was the most painful one to do. That was really miserable. They understood right away what had happened to me and they proceeding to give me flowers because they had changed the place totally. It was bright and it was cheerful where it had been stark

and dark. There were flowers everywhere and so they proceeded to show me all the pictures that they had; the children that were there.

Were they the same people?

Not the same sisters. They weren't the same sisters.

But they knew the legacy?

Right, they did know. So from there, I was there by myself. As my brother got a little bit older, I think my brother was about a year and a half old, according to my mother the brown Jews or somebody came and said hide your children. They took us away and my parents weren't supposed to know where and it was the most horrible place on earth. There were two other children with us that came from the town and I forgot to ask my mother what their names were. One of them was named Louie, who didn't survive. He finally ended up being deported anyway, and his brother. We were at a town, the name I do not remember and my mother does not remember. We were absolutely--we really didn't have enough food to eat there. It was the most horrible place; we were constantly punished. I was punished for losing a barrette; I went without supper. It was really pretty awful. My mother had a dream that we didn't have enough food and that we were not well and she woke up my father one night and she says we have got to go get the children. He says no we shouldn't; she says if you don't come with me, I'll go by myself. So they went to Taub (ph) (c.196) to the Red Cross who had placed us. She insisted that they tell her where we were. They finally did and she came and got us. I remember she was absolutely so upset when she saw us because we had gotten so thin and--.

You remember being at this place?

Yes.

This was a home, with people?

It was a home, yes, with people. It was a private home. It was not an institution or anything like that. It was a private home. We went to school. I remember we had to walk quite a few miles to go to school.

Was this your first experience in school?

No, because I had started in St. Laurent de Neste in kindergarten. Maybe, I'm messing up--I think we were in school there, I'm not sure. I remember we used to dig for roots in the soil to see, to eat. We used to go to people and ask for food, if I remember correctly. My mother tells me that the people, when she finally got there to get us, that the neighbors came and told them how happy they were that they came for us and got us out of there.

What happened from that point?

After that, I don't remember if it's this one or the one before--I went on a farm, Labastide it was called and I stayed there also for a few months. It was in the foothills of the Pyrenees on a farm. Even as miserable as I was, because how could I ever be happy being away from my parents, I knew that it was a beautiful place. I could remember walking out in the Spring and having just a field of narcissuses as far as the eye could see. Because it was the foothills of Pyrenees, the roads were very steep. Everybody would leave the bicycle at the farm and the only way you could go down was to walk down to the town. The food was there, it was farm food, but the food was there.

So you weren't starving?

No, I wasn't starving but I was not happy.

Were there other kids?

There was one girl. I found out when I went back: her name was Lahansel (ph)(c.220); she was adopted. She and I were pretty good friends. My job, since I was four, five years old, on the farm was to keep the birds away from the chickens. They had these prey birds that would come down, circle and circle and then come down and pick chicken. I would stay with a big stick and if I saw them circling, I would start shouting and wave my stick but once in a while, they would get a chicken anyway.

They wouldn't try to attack you, would they?

No.



Good. You went to school while you were there, also?

No, I didn't go to school. Maybe, it was during the summer, I'm not sure. I don't remember going to school there.

Where was your brother?

My brother must have been young. Maybe I've got it out of sequence because there I was by myself. When I went to that other place where I told you, where I was so miserable, my brother was with me.

Were your parents in the vicinity all this time?

They weren't too far. When I was at Labastide, it was the sister of our neighbor, Madame Cazeau, this is a picture of her. It was just a question of saving--according to my mother, it was just a question of trying to keep me away from the house. In case something happened, that I would be saved.

Do you remember any incidents at this time, Nazis or any bombings or anything, did anything go on at this time?

Bombings, no. I never heard any bombings. The only time that I saw them when they would drop their--I can remember; they would come down to the town to Labastide, into the town and they would drop off their bicycles. I remember being in the five, you know how; these old farms--there's just one big room, with the big fireplace, literally how you see it in Plymouth plantation--that's how they cooked on an open fire. I can remember when the Germans--I could never distinguish the difference between the Germans or the gendarme, the police, whenever they appeared, I would go on the corner of the fireplace and try to make myself as small as I could. I was always afraid, I was very much afraid.

I'm sure. Were there other playmates at this time?

No, I don't remember any playmates at all.

How long--you were only there for just a few months?

I think it was just a few months that I was there.

Where were you afterwards?

I think it was the farm, the Red Cross, the convent and then for a while, instead of sleeping--after a while my mother said if we perish, we perish together. What I would do is I would not sleep at home at night. She would send me to the neighbor's house and I would sleep with their daughter, Huni(ph)(c.268). Again I used to wake up in the middle of the night and I used to get frightened. I could hear the mice in the walls and I couldn't sleep. It was a time of always being frightened and didn't know why. I think we could feel it from the adults but they never would tell us anything so we really--this fear was not known, was an unknown fear. Which actually made it worse because we never knew where it was coming from. My mother got false identity papers from the policeman who was helping her. At the beginning--my father still talked until he died, about the garden that he had in back of the house. I went back to see that garden; I could remember it so vividly. One night, they did come for my father and my mother was told--. Monsieur Couquebert sent his wife during the day and told her that my father should not be home that night. He went across, where I told you, across the house and he watched them; in the middle of the night they came for him. It was no longer safe for him to stay there. What they did is, I'm sure you've heard of the Basseur, (ph) (c.287) the people who would take the Jews from France to Spain where it was supposed to be safer?

Smugglers, kind of.

That's exactly what happened. They took the men and took them over to Spain and my father ended up in Spain.

What did he do in Spain, do you know?

He was in a camp, what they call a concentration camp, in Miranda. They struggled but they survived and we were left in the Pyrenees by ourselves with my mother. What my father used to do in order to earn his living; he worked in leather. When they would kill the cows, the oxen, he would take the leather and tan it. He would make pocketbooks. My bag was \_\_\_\_\_(c.300) from my father. As a matter of fact, when I back to this little town ten years ago, this Hunee (ph)(c.302) who

I used to sleep with, she showed me and I don't have a picture of it here, she showed me a pocketbook that my father made for her.

That's interesting. So your father got to Spain and then your mother came to the farm and took you out, is that what happened?

Then we stayed with her.

Where was this?

Still in St. Laurent De Neste. However, the twenty people that were there with us who--and I wasn't really that much aware of them--I was aware of my mother's sister and her husband in Marcel but I wasn't aware of anybody else for some reason.

I was going to ask you, did they associate with one another or was it dangerous?

There was a lot of--my mother tells me that they were not very nice to her, as far as the Jewish people that were there.

Why?

I don't know. They were just cliquish, you know, unfortunately.

Interesting that in every situation that ---.

They decided that when it got to be too dangerous and they decided that they were going to Spain, my brother was too young to go, to cross the Pyrenees, so Labastide's basseur (??) (322) that he would come back for her and we were left behind and everybody left. As it turned out, this basseur (c.325) worked--what my mother never understood is that the men went first and they made it, he took them there. But the others, the rest of them, they were delivered into the Germans' hands and so they all perished.

Oh, G\_\_. And so by chance you just didn't go with them.

We didn't go because my brother was too young to go. My mother's sister, her husband, when they were in the mountains, the Germans came upon them. Uncle Jack was behind. He wasn't with his wife so he went to go with his wife, to protect them and his son and at that point he was shot. He died right there and then.

Did the smuggler get killed also?

He was the--the Resistance got him. He was shot.

So they were betrayed?

They were betrayed. He got money from the Jews and he got money from the Germans.

Wait, he was collaborating with the Germans and the Resistance went after him, I see.

Yes, the Resistance got after him. His wife, there was a woman there, my mother was telling me last night, there was a woman in the town who arranged all this. They got after her too. They shaved her head, I understand.

The Resistance?

Yes.

Was there much resistance activity in this town, do you know?

Evidently, there was, yes.

Was your mother aware of it? Did they make contact at all?

They made contact with her after the war to see if she could identify any of the people who had betrayed them. Because at the time when all the Jews left, she begged her sister not to go, to stay with her. Her sister went and that's when they were put on the train to Auschwitz, she was able to send her that letter.

What year was this?

It blew my mind. When I went back to St. Laurent de Neste and the little town--my mother couldn't remember where my uncle was buried--because I remember when he was shot that my mother and I went to the cemetery to the town, now I know its name is Shaum (ph) (c.359) and we went to place a plaque on his tomb. They found her somewhere because there was one girl that escaped from the group; she ran and she was able to escape. She lived with us, evidently, for a little while. Her name was Rosa Rosenberg. I remember going with her by train to that little town where we placed that plaque. When I went back, it blew my mind because I saw that it was just a few days before the debarcation (?) (c.368) when the Americans went into France.

So that was already forty---?

'44, June 44 when they were caught.

Do you know what year it was then when you were--for example, how many years were you in this town then, for three years?

'39 to '45.

Oh, okay, for six years. Did you attend school at all then after you came back there?

Yes, I went to school.

You did. Were you ever told you were Jewish or anything like that by your parents?

I remember my father, for a while, that he was trying to teach me Yiddish. I remember he tried but I guess he felt that it probably would not be the safest thing to do, so he stopped. For some reason,

even though my parents learned Yiddish and I certainly understand it well, I never attempted to speak it. One thing that I regret immensely, is not speaking Yiddish.

Well, it's never too late.

My son and I, we were going to try and learn . One time, I remember, I made inquiries to see if we could find--and there was a class but somehow we never materialized it and learned Yiddish. Do you speak it?

No. But now I'm also thinking that I should.

Sometimes, I go down to Florida where my mother and father were and all you hear speaking is Yiddish. I lament the fact that some day it's not going to be anymore.

Probably not. Some day soon.

It's such a rich language, too.

Yes. We should all go take Yiddish. I have been thinking of it also.

But you must speak Hebrew.

Yes, I speak Hebrew fluently.

That, I envy you because I want to be able to speak it.

I spent a lot of time there. Are there any specific episodes or anything from your war time experiences that stand out in your mind vividly. I'm sure there must be some things that happened or--.

Do you want to hear good things, bad things? Anything at all.

Anything, everything.

I was trying to think of all the things that I remember. One thing I remember is because we didn't have much food, there wasn't much meat in those days and I can remember my father raising rabbits in one room in that house where we lived and we were overrun with rabbits. My father couldn't kill one of them for food because they were friendly little rabbits. I don't think we ate one of them.

That's good.

Then I remember there was a little closet outside and we had a duck. I can remember one time, in absolute awe, I opened the door to let the two ducks out and the little ducklings came tumbling after them, the little yellow ducklings, that was so cute! I remember the geese used to walk around the town. There was one place where there were geese and they would run after you and pinch you something fierce. They were awful, really, really bad.

That's funny. They weren't afraid of people.

No. They used them like dogs to guard places. Oh, yes, they attack and they are very mean.

And they can be trained to do that?

I don't think they need too much training. It's instinct.

Just give them some food. That's interesting. Is there anything else? Those are nice images.

I can remember swimming in the town, in the river. I can remember going to church with my friends. We used to cut out the wafers for the communion.

Your parents encouraged you to go to church?

Yes, they did.

Did they go to church too?

I think my mother attended a couple of times, yes. I used to do a lot in the church. Again, the church was the center of the town. I did that.

You had a lot of playmates there?

Yes, I did. There were all these things to do around the church and so on and I certainly partook part in all that. Most of it, though, was terror, fear. Although after a while, my mother finally decided we were going to stay together and we were together, I think there was less of it than before. It was always this fear, first of all, that I was going to be sent away. And I was sent away a lot, even after the war, I was. It wasn't something that remained just for the war. After the war, also, that was a kind of betrayal on my parents' part that I was pensioned off again.

I would like to hear about that. Do you want finish with the war period and go on to that? Is there anything else you can--for my purposes, for this project, I'm going to concentrate on the war period. For the purposes of our interview, I would like to have everything down.

I'm trying to think of what else you would be interested in. I know that at one time, my mother tells me and I don't remember that, she was told that she had to leave. That it was no longer safe for her. Don't forget that the mayor also was helping us to stay and she was told not to stay there, to leave. She didn't know where to go. She put my brother in the stroller and took some food with her and she started walking away from the town. It's not as if you could take a bus or anything like that so she started walking and walking. At night, she knocked on the door of a farmer and asked if she could stay with her children, she would not make any noise. I think one of them refused her, she was afraid. Another one let her stay, I think, in the barn. The next morning, I don't know how my mother did that, she must have been so frightened, the next morning she started walking again. I think the second day, this Hunai(c.480) who I used to sleep with, who was my neighbor, she was about 18, 19, she came on her bicycle after my mother and told her that it was safe, that she could come back. Remember I told you how my father used to work with the leather; he used to take the skin and tan it; there's a whole process that you go through and he would make a pocketbook. My father tells the story, you know how for the oxen, they used to have a stick with like a nail on the end, they would prick them on the rear end to get them to go faster. My father used to get mad because they used to ruin it, they would pierce the skin and it would ruin the leather. He would make the skins and my mother would sell the skins, it was her job. That was the black market.



Where did he get the cows and the oxen. That was illegal, or wasn't it? Where were they provided?

When they killed the cows, I guess, they used to give my father the skins or he would buy the skins. He did work for a while too. He worked maybe as an upholster in \_\_\_\_\_(c.502), he tells me, I think, he used to go there every so often but then it stopped. My mother tells me that they managed to--she had money; she was left with some money. Mr. Couquebert, the one who was so helpful to her, when my father left for Spain, he came over. My mother says he opened his wallet and he says here, how much do you need? He was willing to give her whatever she needed.

That's very nice. Was he given some kind of commendation afterwards?

I don't know if he was. I think that's why--I talked to my mother last night. I wanted to get the names because I think they should. He did perish. He somehow went back to England and got back into the armed forces and he perished during the war. He ended up being killed. He certainly should be one of the righteous because he certainly did help us. I don't think without him, we would have survived.

Could be, good chance. It's amazing how you found these all these little towns they just went all over.

I don't know if you saw the movie that was shown by Bill Moyers on Channel 13, the education--called "The Weapons of the Spirit". That you've got to see. It's about a little town in France called the Chambon.

Oh, yes, I know about the Chambon. Okay.

An amazing, amazing story and I watched it glued to the television. The tears just kept coming out because it reminded me so much of that little town, where without them, we would not have survived.

I want to stop the tape and flip it over. Okay.

I remember the day that my mother got a letter from the Red Cross saying that my father had made into Spain. I remember the day that my mother got the letter from my aunt, her sister, that she was on her way to Auschwitz.

You didn't tell me about that on the tape, did you? Would you like to tell me about please.

My mother said that when they finally assembled, got assembled to leave where the basseur(c.587) was going to take over the Pyrenees into Spain, they all got together in back of the cemetery. I remember a woman arriving, I didn't know who she was and she arrived with a suitcase and she asked me a question where my mother was. I told her where she was and I guess she was one of them. I don't remember who she was. She perished also; she went with them.

My mother begged her sister to stay and she wouldn't stay and she went. A while later she got a letter from her that she was in a cattle car so \_\_\_\_\_ to Auschwitz. I remember the day that my mother got the letter.

How did she--?

She was walking around in total despair. I didn't know. It's only later that I realize what it was. The Russians came. There was a bunch of Russians that came also from--I guess they were on their way to Franco, to Spain. They stopped at our house; my mother happened to speak Russian. They brought her food, anything she wanted. They had food and stuff, they brought her in the back. My mother spoke fluent Russian then--.

How is that? She's from Poland though.

She also lived in Russia for a while. That's where she learned Russian. I remember being in Paris during the liberation.

The Americans?

Right. She finally decided that she had to go back to Paris in order to get my father back from Spain. We went back to Paris and we lived, I think, with her sister for a little while until my father came back. She found an apartment. I remember my father coming back from Spain, brown and looking good with a bunch of bananas that we had never seen. We became a family again.

How was that?

I guess it was tough for them. They had lost everything again. Nothing was left from the old apartment. Everything was gone, apartments were hard to get so we got an apartment. They began to try and find ways to--. Somehow, they got hold of my uncle in this country and I remember, imagine having an Uncle Sam!. He used to send us packages with chewing gum and everything you could imagine in those packages. In the name of--they had to rebuild their lives--we were again sent off to homes by ourselves.

Was that a common thing?

Pretty common, yes.

Where were you sent?

In the countryside.

For how long?

A year, six months. I was very, very \_\_\_\_ (c.624), very hard to take. You could understand, I think, as children we understood during the war that it was inevitable or that it was necessary, but after the war it was--.

Your parents felt that they couldn't function, they couldn't build up as quickly if you were around?

They did that also even before the war, as a child.

That's interesting. Do you want to talk a little bit about the time after the war, when you came to America?

I don't know. It probably won't be part of the war story so I don't think--I could tell you but I don't think it needs to be recorded.

Then that's up to you. Some people want it for a sense of completion to tell their entire situation for the purpose of the interview. If you'd rather not, that's fine.

Only to say that after the war, I was seven years old when I got back to Paris. We lived in Paris for six years. Then we came to the United States.

So you went to high school in the United States?

Yes. I went to Lesane (ph) (c.637), for a year and a half in Paris. Then I came here. I started here in junior high school. My parents, they were born in Poland or Russia. They came to France, my father went to Spain and came back to France and then came here so it was a constant upheaval for them to adjust and learn new languages and new ways. It was tough.

What about your sense of--once you were reunited and after the war, was there any more sense of Jewishness in the family?

I certainly knew that I was Jewish when I was in France. I remember that, we didn't have libraries the way you have libraries here--where you can go into the library and pick any book you want. So they used to have books, some books in the school that you could borrow and you could pick a book on one day. They announced a book, some Jewish history or something just before it was my time to pick a book and I remember I picked a book. I went to some organization, I think my mother made me join some organizations that I enjoyed. By and large, I think, I didn't know anything about Judaism at all. I knew more about, since I was in the convent, and all my little friends were Catholic, I knew more about the Catholic religion than I did about Judaism. It was only when I came to this county, after I got married; I was almost ashamed. People would ask me questions about the Jewish holidays and I didn't know anything about them, that I began to learn what they all meant. It's now that I've started to partake in the Seder and different things.

Did you have a sense, when you were with the Catholic children, that you weren't part of them?

I always knew there was something different about me.

I've spoken to other people who had that. They knew they were going through all the motions and everything but said that they knew it wasn't their----. Would you like to talk about your aunt and uncle who were taken away?

They were--I remember my cousin and he was a brat.

His name was Marcel?

His name was Marcel? I can't remember the last name. I know that their names are in Yad Vashem. I think that's been recorded.

If you could find that out for me?

I'll find out the last name. It just escapes me right now. I don't remember, I remember him more than I remember--. I remember the house they lived in and I have a picture of that. They lived in the house that my brother was born in. I remember visiting them.

In Paris?

No, in St. Laurent De Neste. Anything in Paris before the war, I do not remember, I was just too young.

How old was Marcel?

He must have been two or three years older than I was. He must have been about seven, maybe.

Do you know where he was born?

He must have been born in Paris.

So he was a brat? He was rambunctious? or he was just bad? or mean to you?

He was mean, yes. I always felt guilty about saying that since he perished. But he was. My mother tells the story of how he wouldn't eat. You know mothers always have to feed their, especially their sons, their children. She would take and do every thing for him so that he would eat. I do not remember that much.

You wouldn't know anything about his schooling, or any of his family background?

No, I would have to ask my mother.

If we could find that out for a future point, then we could use his story. Otherwise, it would be difficult.

Yes, to get it together, yes.

Is there anything else that you would like to tell me that you can think of? with regard to your particular experience or with any of the reprecisions? That is entirely up to you.

I can't think of anything as far as the--. I think, as a child, it was so painful, we were in such pain all the time, that we just didn't--. It's like not being awake all the time, it's kind of a strange sensation. It's like if it was too painful, you just forgot, you just didn't remember or you just weren't there. I don't know what I was thinking of but I don't have the vivid recollections. There are certain things that are very vivid, like in the convent. Having to go to the chapel, praying--. I remember the food, I remember them giving us this hot chocolate made with water for breakfast and hating it.

What else did you have to eat?

Bread, mostly bread. That's the only thing that I remember about food--tomatoes, there must have been some vegetables that kids didn't like vegetables. I remember--as I said, I was so afraid to go into the convent. It was only at the last, last minute that I rang the doorbell and we went. The town itself, I can remember walking from my house to where my aunt used to live. As the picture shows you, there was like a wall in the street and I can remember the sun making shadows on the wall. I used to be so scared to walk through that, it was like a, what do they call it, a calfule (ph) (c.712), between two streets and oh I used to be so scared, always scared. I can remember having whooping cough and being very sick.

Was there any way to get medical attention?

There was a doctor, I remember being treated by the doctor. I don't know how much they could do but I do remember having the whooping cough.

Do you think that this sense of fear, you carried this?

Oh, yes. I remember the night my brother was born. I was four years old and I remember that. I tried to think of the town. I can remember my brother was always being absconded, I always had to go look for my brother. They used to say, he's in the shirt, in the chemise; they used to make fun of me.

Your brother lives in America now?

Yes.

Do you talk to him about the experience?

Not much. I really, as I said, never really told the whole story. I remember the woman in that place, where I told you, where we didn't really have enough to eat. How she used to walk with her feet pigeon like this and I remember once asking her how come you walk like that? She says when you get old, you'll walk like that.

Did you write notes that you'd like to look at?

These were just notes that I wrote when I sent back to St. Laurent de Neste about ten years ago. Probably my mother has one, I should get it back from her. I wrote to her at great length when I was there, sent her some long letters. At night I would get back to the hotel and I would have to write it down and I probably should get that back from her because that's when I really put my feelings down, very traumatic. She says she cried when she got the letters. For a long time, especially during the terrorists, when France didn't want to give the terrorists, I think it was during the Munich thing--.

The Olympics?

The Olympics. I got mad at French and as much as I liked the cheeses, I think, for a whole year, I boycotted the cheese. Then I began to realize, wait a second, how about all the people who had been so nice and without whom you wouldn't have survived so I started to buy cheese again.

Why suffer?

No, I didn't want them to suffer.

Do you identify with your French roots, or you've really been in this country for a long time?

Do I identify with, yes, this is a part of me that's really--. It's really one of the things that's difficult. When I go back to France, some of the things, some of the basic things, I speak French fluently, but some of the basic things, sometimes, I don't know how to do, I have to ask. They look really--.

You feel silly?

Silly, silly. People look at me, where have you been, what planet did you come from? But I do enjoy going to France.

I was thinking, perhaps your home was sort of atypical anyway since your parents were immigrants there. Were they fully French?

My mother was. My father, no, but my mother definitely was.

He had an accent then in his French as well?

Yes.



So he was in great danger?

My father was, in more danger than my mother. It's just amazing that we did survive as a family. So many, as you saw, didn't survive.

Is there anything else you want to tell me for this interview?

I don't think so. I think this covers it. Just to make sure that the town does get recognition, that it is written up--all the names of the people, the French. It was just amazing that without this little town, if they had been hostile, or if they had not wanted us, I do not know how we would have survived. I don't think there was a way to survive.

I would like for you to write down these names for me if you could do this. At this point, I guess, we can stop and I want to thank you very much.

My pleasure.