

OGA-BOSTON

Denise Khaitman Schorr - Tape 1

My father, mother, sister and I lived in Paris in an apartment . My father was a prosperous shoe merchant. He escaped from Russia to Paris to avoid the Russian Army and went to work for my mother's father. He met my mother there and married her and continued to work for his father-in-law. My grandmother lived with us.

In 1939 we left Paris with my grandmother and cousin and went to live in a small hamlet Pareideux. The roads were crowded with many escaping Paris. We lived in a barn (13 of us). Some of the people who left Paris were non Jews.

My father came from an orthodox family. My sister and I had no Jewish education although we knew we were Jews. We celebrated Passover and other Jewish holidays and that was it. We never went to a Bar Mitzvah. My mother's family is from Lithuania and she came to Paris as a baby. My parents were Francophiles.

We stayed at the hamlet in the barn for three months. I went back to Paris myself in about a month and one day when I came home to my apartment I found my parents there. My father could not run his own stores and went to work for someone else. In 1941 Jews had to go to the police to have Jew stamped on our I.Ds. After a while we had to wear Stars of David. We could not go to the cinema or public places.

I worked for an organization that helped Jewish families and children, a social service agency and we tried to save and feed as many people as we could by getting false identification cards for them so they could get rations. We helped sick people get into hospitals.

At first only men were taken away then they took women too and left the children behind. When my aunt and uncle were taken away, my cousin came to live with us. Children from Holland and other countries were sent to Paris and we tried to place them with Gentile families and in the unoccupied zone. My mother's family did not survive.

One night there was a meeting at night in the building where I worked. My father refused to let me go. That night the building was entered by the Germans and no one survived.

In August my father came home and said You can take off your Star. The Germans and Poles who insisted they did not know what was going on, were lying.

Jews could not go marketing till 10 am and after 6 at night. With the long lines and the shortages, there was nothing left for us. It was not easy for the French either but of course it was worse for the Jews.

All young men had to go to Germany to work in the factories. When we were in bed, we heard the clump of the boots and were terrified. Curfew for Jews was 8 pm, for the French 11 pm. People were picked up at random and we never saw them again. My aunt and grandmother stayed in the hamlet and returned to Paris after the liberation.

My husband was stationed in France and wanted to go to the synagogue for Rosh Hashona. The small synagogue was in the building where I worked and he arrived too late for the service. It was my birthday and they were making a party for me. I invited him to come to the party as a liberator. I also invited him to come for Yom Kippur. He asked me to marry him, we were the first French-American couples to marry in Paris after the war.

It was difficult to come to the U.S, I went to the American Embassy and they advised me to see a travel agent who arranged for me to go to Antwerp. The travel agent helped me to come to New York. The woman I shared a room with on the ship was Polish and she spoke to me about how the Jews killed Christ. It took 3 weeks to get to New York. After 5 years in the Army my husband and I went to live in Mass. We light candles on Shabbat, we attend services on the holidays. We are dedicated to the survival of Judaism.

Tape 2

I have 5 children, 4 living children. My children know about my part in the Holocaust. We try to tell them the way it is. I remember my father used to tell me about pogroms and I could not accept it. You have to experience it to believe it. My cousin understands it, his parents were killed in the Holocaust and he is surrounded by memorials and it is different.

I love America. The freedom ; my life has been enriched here. The Holocaust can be forgotten too quickly. I thought that after the Holocaust the world would be at peace, no more friction, unfortunately it is not so.

DeGaulle was at Notre Dame after the war and we went over there. Shooting started and the police opened the subway station for us to hide in.

Last of the Just by Schwartz Bart, my friend said she could not read it , it was too terrible. I read it and found it too horrible to finish.