

DONOR: MARCELLE BERGER
INTERVIEWER: AUDREY ROBBIE
DATE: MARCH 2, 1989

Tape Footage: Background

1 - 463 Marcelle was born in 1916 in the French colony of Tunisia. Her father had been a French professor at the Sorbonne, and was asked to move to Tunisia to teach.

There were three children in the family, Pierre, Jean and Marcelle. Marcelle's father died when she was two. Her mother returned to her mother in France, where the family had lived for centuries. To support her family, her mother then moved to Bordeaux and opened a store.

Marcelle attended school and one year of university there.

WWII

When the war broke out Marcelle went to live with her aunt and grandmother in Lebug, so that she would not be sent to Germany as a free worker. This was a small town and no one thought it would ever be occupied. Eventually it was. There were many Jewish refugees from Paris living there.

Marcelle's uncle was the town mayor. He helped many refugees by providing false papers for them. The other townspeople were not concerned with the refugees. Her uncle was an elderly man and could have been denounced at anytime. His daughter's husband worked for the underground, and was denounced and killed.

465 -1066 Marcelle heard of this man who was making handbags, and with a friend went to see his handiwork. This man was Simon Berger (see tape Berger, Simon). The friend ordered a handbag and Simon delivered it to Marcelle's aunt's house. They gave him more orders, and Marcelle went to pick them up. She felt sad for him when she saw how he was living. They became friends, went for walks together, and after a few months, in 1946, married. They remained in town for two more years, then moved to the Perigueux, and then to Canada.

In Winnipeg Marcelle and Simon worked together in his business. Simon had arrived first, and sent for Marcelle nine months later.

Marcelle studied English in the evenings.

Marcelle's uncle used to distribute ration tickets, and she would take extra ones to Simon.

Her family remained in France.

After living in Canada for eight years, she began working as a substitute French teacher for a few years.

She has been happy here.