

Summary of Oral History: Oral History Interview with Raymond Goldfarb

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Summary

Raymond Goldfarb was born in 1918 in Paris, France. His father was Polish and his mother Swiss. She came to Paris to escape antisemitism in Switzerland and to find a Jewish husband. Goldfarb tells of his childhood and teenage years until 1938: raised in a Catholic neighborhood; went to a local public school and made friends there with non-Jews; not aware of any antisemitism; Jewish upbringing minimum though he was Bar Mitzvahed. In 1931 the Depression hit France, his father lost his factory, young Raymond quit school at age 13, working menial jobs and then in a furrier shop. In 1938 at 20 years old Raymond was drafted into the French army and went to Joinville near the Maginot line where he was a radio operator. He felt no antisemitism from fellow soldiers. When Germans broke through Maginot Line in May 1940 he became a prisoner of war and sent to Saarbrucken and then nearby to a large camp (unnamed) with 50,000 other soldiers for only three months. Then worked briefly on a farm and finally brewery near Saarbrucken. He worked with 5 other soldiers, non-Jews, and some German civilians from 1942 to 1945. Worked 10 hours per day but wasn't mistreated. German army, not SS, was in charge. Felt no antisemitism from his fellow soldiers though he hid his Judaism by changing his name to "Raymond Duran." Did not hear from or about family throughout war nor about progress of allies until 1944. Liberated in April, 1945 by 7th U.S. army. Returned to Paris and found his parents and sister there. They had been hidden during the war by Catholic families and returned to their apartment when Paris was liberated. Widow of father's brother and two sons who in the *Maquis* killed. Goldfarb did not know of death camps until after liberation. In 1948 he sailed to U.S. and went to stay and work with Aunt and Uncle in Kansas City. Worked his way up to owning an electrical business. Met his wife who is from Germany and married in 1958.