

Interview with Henry Allouche conducted on 6/23/2011 by the Fundacion Memoria Viva

Henry Allouche, born on October 15, 1940 in Paris, recalls few memories of his life during the Holocaust and, in particular, no memory of his mother, sister, and brother, deported and murdered at Sobibor; describes faint recollections: being in the countryside in a small house with a man and a woman and 2 or 3 other children, where he believes he was hidden, being afraid to go alone at night to an outhouse in the garden, probably at the age of 2, being with his father in Lyon after the war around 1945, who made small ceramic boats for him to play with; repeatedly stresses that, since he was only 2 years old, his recollections are limited, filled in sketchily by his father who didn't talk much, and his own personal research, begun around 2002 [at the age of 62]; describes father's statements to him, supplemented by documents he found that, around 1941 or 1942, father working in a leather factory in Paris was told to flee because the Germans were coming and he fled to Lyon, mother, forewarned about Vel d'hiv, takes Henry, his brother and sister, and flees towards Spain, arriving in Orthez, about 30 km from the Spanish border, where they were arrested on October 5, 1942 by the German police; documents indicate they were sent to Camp Merignac [Bordeaux] on October 26, 1942, transferred by convoy # 4 to Drancy, Henry hospitalized on November 20, 1942, sent to the Hospital Rothschild with a hernia; describes conflicting information indicating that he left hospital December 20, 1942 or 15 January 1943 or even March 3, 1943, (because documents say he was "liberated" on March 3, 1943 without explanation of "liberated"); cared for by a Hospital Rothschild social worker named Claire Herman [PH]; describes information from father saying Claire took him from the hospital and probably hid him but he has no further information; states that mother, sister and brother were transferred from Drancy to Beaune-la-Rolande because of overcrowding at Drancy, returned to Drancy on March 24, 1943 and deported on the 53rd convoy to Sobibor March 25, 1943 where they were murdered; recounts, according to his father, that his father "found" him in 1943 with no further information, and they returned to Paris; Henry eventually marries, has three children, 2 daughters and a son and five grandchildren; describes pain of waiting so long to fill in the gaps in his knowledge and inability to complete the task.