

Albert Garih



Born June 24, 1938, in Paris, France

Albert Garih and his twin brother were born June 24, 1938, in Paris, France, to Benjamin and Claire (née Alfandari) Garih. Albert's twin died in infancy. Natives of Constantinople (now Istanbul), Turkey, Benjamin and Claire had each moved to Paris in 1923, where they met and married in 1928. Benjamin worked in a garment factory and the family lived in the janitor's house at the factory, where Claire stayed home taking care of Albert and his two sisters, Jacqueline, born in 1930, and Gilberte, born in 1933.

First Person

Today at 1:00pm

Doors open at 12:45pm

Germany Occupies Paris

In May 1940, Germany invaded France and occupied Paris. Many of the approximately 175,000 Jews living in Paris tried to flee the city ahead of the advancing Germans. The Garihs headed south without any specific destination and spent several nights in a chateau along the Loire River, sleeping on the floor. With nowhere to go, however, they soon returned to Paris, where they were subjected to France's new anti-Jewish measures patterned after Germany's Nuremberg laws. In July 1942, the Garihs were forced to move into a two-room apartment with no bathroom or shower and only a toilet and tiny kitchen.



In September 1943, the German authorities deported Albert's father, Benjamin, to a forced labor camp in the Channel Islands, the only British territory occupied by the Axis powers. Shortly after Benjamin's departure, Claire confessed to Madame Galop, a woman she had met at the market, that she feared being taken away with her children. Madame Galop and her husband invited Claire and her children to stay with them. They hid with the Galops for more than six months during 1943 and 1944, until a neighbor threatened to denounce them to the German authorities.

Claire and her children then returned home, where two French police inspectors came to their door in June 1944. Though they had been instructed by the Gestapo to arrest the Garihs, the police agreed to report that they were not home if the family left immediately. Claire and Albert spent the next few nights hiding with their Communist neighbors, the Ménétriers, while Jacqueline and Gilberte hid on the ground floor of their building with the

janitor.

With the help of a local social worker, the Garihs found places to stay. Claire worked as a governess for a Parisian family. Albert was placed in a Catholic boarding school for boys while his sisters were placed in one for girls, both in the northeastern suburb of Montfermeil. The children had no way of communicating with their mother. Though Albert was protected by the headmistress—he suspects she knew he was Jewish—he became incredibly thin and weak from the scarcity of food during wartime.

The Allied Powers Liberate Paris

In August 1944, the Allied powers liberated Paris and then Montfermeil shortly thereafter. As soon as the train service was restored, Claire went to Montfermeil and brought her children back to Paris.

In May 1944, just a month before D-Day, German authorities evacuated the prisoners detained on the Island of Alderney via Cherbourg towards Boulogne. Some prisoners, including Benjamin, were deployed as forced laborers in the Boulogne-Calais-Dunkerque triangle repairing German coastal fortifications installations damaged by Allied bombing. In August, shortly after the Allies broke out of the Normandy beachhead and began their rapid sweep through France, the Germans intended to transport these Jews to concentration camps in Germany, but members of the Belgian resistance stopped the train and liberated the remaining prisoners, including Benjamin. Benjamin walked back home from Dixmude, Belgium to Paris and arrived the morning of Rosh Hashanah.

After the War

In 1962 Albert received a degree in English and Spanish to French translation from the School of Advanced Translation and Interpretation Studies at the Sorbonne and in 1967 he married Marcelle Ohayon, with whom he has three daughters and ten grandchildren. He has worked as a translator at several major organizations, including the translation office of the president of Cameroon; a UN agency in Montreal; and the World Bank, which brought him to Washington, DC, in 1976.

In the early 1990s, through Albert's application, Yad Vashem recognized the Galops and the Ménétriers as Righteous Among the Nations. Today Albert serves as a volunteer at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

*Hear the words of Holocaust survivors in the First Person podcast series:
<http://www.ushmm.org/learnfromsurvivors>*