

**Summary of Oral History: FRANCINE (ERLICH) HOLLANDER, MARCEL HOLLANDER, LOUISE (LOULOU) HOLLANDER**

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**This Summary was written by a USHMM Volunteer on [04/2022]**

This interview was done in 2017 with Marcel Hollander, his wife Francine (Erllich) Hollander and Marcel's sister Louise, referred to frequently as Loulou Hollander. Since Louise died in 2011, at times her daughter Rita speaks for her and at times, I believe, we heard Louise's voice from an earlier interview. Marcel was born December 9, 1933, Francine on September 2, 1935, and Louise (Loulou) on April 25, 1930. All were from Liège in Belgium. Marcel remembered a happy childhood for him and his sister. Their father was a successful coiffure. Marcel and his sister spoke Yiddish with their parents, and he said that he still liked speaking it, though the interview was carried out in French.

When the war came to Belgium Marcel and his future wife Francine remembered the bombardment while they were at school. Marcel's father reopened his coiffure store after the bombardment ended and he even served German soldiers. His coiffure shop did not at first have a Jewish star in the window. After a while, the situation worsened; radios were taken away and roundups began. Marcel's parents were especially upset at the loss of their radio, because they could not have news of their relatives in Poland. The family went to Brussels where Marcel's mother had a distant cousin. Though roundups also took place in Brussels Marcel's father and mother were not taken. Marcel went to school there for a few months until it became too dangerous. The family had to wear a yellow star, but Marcel hid his.

Loulou's testimony, perhaps from a previous interview. She reported that in 1942 she and her brother were separated from their parents and hidden first by a Flemish and then a French family. Their parents came and separated them. Loulou went to stay at the Institute for the Deaf and Blind run by nuns. She stayed there for two years and studied and lived with the blind children. Loulou reported that life was hard for her, separated from her parents and brother and being sent out to beg for food. The Mother Superior of the of the Convent, Cécile Stingers, was recognized as Righteous in 1999.

The interview then passed to "Two Paternal Uncles" told by Francine. Apparently, two Polish uncles served first in the Polish Army and then willingly in the Russian Army. They survived and came to Brussels after the war. (This story was told by Francine, her daughter, and cousins. They didn't always agree on details.)

Francine then told her story. Her father had a clothing workshop at Anderlecht. He had two brothers in Poland. She was later hidden with a family (Edgard Preux and Marie Preux Rousseau) in the village of Frankeries. Francine had to change her name to the more Belgian sounding Francine Desmet. The Preux family was very loving, and Francine enjoyed her time

there. She went to school and did not experience antisemitism. The resistance was active in the region and got false papers for her. Francine was sad to leave when her parents came to get her after the war. Her “godparents” also did not want her to go since they were childless. However, Francine continued to visit on weekends. Her brother Philippe was also hidden, but his experience with a very strict Protestant family was less congenial.

After the war Francine and Marcel met in a Zionist youth movement and went to Israel. Loulou did not go, but Francine’s brother also went to Israel as part of another youth movement.