Index: RG-50.030.0532

Title: Oral history interview with Lucie Ragin

Interviewee: Ms. Lucie Ragin

Interviewer: Peggy Frankston

00:00:00

**Q: Let me change the tape. Yeah, we’re gonna change tapes.**

A: I thought it was – End of Tape One http://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy. Interview with Lucie Ragin July 23, 2009 15 Beginning Tape Two

A: When I was in Tres, I went to school. I played with the children. We st – we made little things, little clothes for the dolls, and I always waited for Christmas because the children always got a lot of toys to play with, and – but I said I was so good, why didn’t I get such a big doll, or why didn’t I get these things. So – because I didn’t understand, so my mother always used to say, oh, don’t worry. And one day Madame Laville(ph) bought me a lot of toys, so – cause I waited for Santa Claus just like anybody else. And also, I loved going to school, and my mother sewed, so she sometimes would make me clothes and she would knit a whole night sometimes to make me a pair of socks. Sh-she – and I didn’t have the things, the material things like other kids, but I wasn’t really that much aware of it, except when I was cold. And my mother gave my brother and me once money for milk. And we had to stand on line to get extra milk for some reason that store was giving – you could buy more milk and we really needed the milk for my sister Joujou(ph), we called her Joujou(ph), her name is Josephine. And we were playing on line and we lost the money and we came home and we couldn’t – we didn’t have the milk, and boy did we get it. My mother always screamed, she was very nervous, and my father was very calm. And my sister is just like my mother, and I’m just like my father. I tried to be very calm. And I learned French, and I learned the Marseillaise, which I http://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy. Interview with Lucie Ragin July 23, 2009 16 still remember til today, I don’t know how, because now I’m living in the United States a long time and I – sometimes I don’t know all the words to the – the national anthem all the time, I’m embarrassed to say that I forget sometimes. And I also was in France in the Chateau de Marjolet, which they treated you pretty good. But I was always crying, so I don’t know. I made everybody cry by crying. And also I know a lot of kids had lice, and they put powder on their head, or if they had something wrong with their stomach, and I was – I love chocolate, I would give everything for chocolate – so, whatever they gave you, I took it twice, because I got two pieces of chocolate. But they were pretty strict with you, and it wasn’t that bad at the Chateau de Marjolet, but most kids there were orphans, and they cried a lot too, but I made them cry even more, because – so they told – they told my mother to come and get me because – so we had to leave earlier than anticipated. We were there because after the war you couldn’t find an apartment, and my parents had a very small little room. And it was hard to keep us all, we didn’t have a stove, we didn’t have a refrigerator and they still had air – air raids for – and my s – my mother was holding my sister on the way to the shelter and she was missed by a grenade just by a step or two, so it was very scary. And there was a man in our building who was deaf, and he stayed in his apartment all through the thing and nothing happened to him, so I always used to say, why do I have to go to the http://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy. Interview with Lucie Ragin July 23, 2009 17 shelter? And I used to go to the movies, I loved musicals. And that’s really how I learned how to speak English, by going to the movies. My mother used to give me a few francs and I would go to the movies with my brother or by myself. At that time it wasn’t like today. And we had – where we went back to Belgium we had a lot of friends. Our hearts was open to everybody. When we left to come to the United States, the door didn’t close all night long. That’s how many people came to say good-bye to us, and also, after the war, when we lived in Marseilles, we had a young boy who was about 20 years old at the time, he would come and my mother would invite him for Passover and everything and then I heard that he died, my parents were very upset, because he ate too much. You know, aft-after you don’t eat and you start eating after the war, you blow up and you – something happens to you, and I know he died and my parents were very upset, because he had no parents, nobody and he would come to us. So that was bad, too. And while you’re in camp, you do see a lot, you see people that are laying, you don’t know if they’re alive or dead. And you see a lot of bad things. And it’s always with you, and there’s always articles today that will remind you of it. And I’m glad they had the Holocaust Museum, because I go there sometimes. And I try to go to see if I can find pictures that I know. And I find a lot of information and it’s really – I once read http://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy. Interview with Lucie Ragin July 23, 2009 18 that the people that died have no cemetery, so when you go there it’s the same, you know.

**Q: It’s [indecipherable]**

A: Yes, and I’m very lucky that all my family survived and my father lived til he was 80, and my mother lived with me til she was like 86. And my father was very sick, so – my father had heart problems, Alzheimer, everything. And my mother was sick too, but she knew everything til the last minute of her life. And you must always remember and always do things.

**Q: Why did you leave Belgium?**

A: I left Belgium in 1950 to come to the United States. May 17th, 1950. And we loved it here and we still do, you know.

**Q: But why did you leave Belgium, why?**

A: Why? My mother didn’t want to live in that country any more. She didn’t – she didn’t even want to go back to France and I always wanted – I still corresponded with the landlady that saved my li – you know, that saved our lives, and Rabbi Bloch(ph) is the first person that I should thank, because he gave my mother money to escape. And then Madame Laville(ph) is the other one and lama – I don’t know how they did it with the [indecipherable] to bring my sister – it’s like a miracle really, that all five of us survived, and – and are here in the United States, and my http://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy. Interview with Lucie Ragin July 23, 2009 19 mother and father were very happy here, they loved it. We got reunited with my aunt and uncle and my cousins, and we had a – we have a pretty good life. We’re not rich, but we have a good life.

**Q: You have children?**

A: I have a son and a daughter and I have four grandchildren. And my son – they’re all boys. My son has a son, that’s Gregory Ragin, he’s – goes to Binghamton now, he wants to be an engineer. And my other – my daughter has three boys and they’re still – they’re 16 – 16, 12 and seven. And I see them often, and that’s about it, you know. And I’m g – and I read things and I read that in Papiniau(ph), a stat – a monument has been defaced, the Jewish kids that made and – and I get very upset. And that’s why I think we always have to talk about it and there’s so many other problems. There’s always gonna be war. Look what happened in Darfur, looked what happened all over. It’s – and look what’s happening in Iraq and all over. And Afghanistan. And it gets me very upset. But I do try to tell people that, you know, you have to be good to one another, that’s the most important thing. It doesn’t matter what religion you are, but you just have to be a good human being.

**Q: Thank you very much for interviewing with us.**

A: Okay End of Tape Two http://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy. Interview with Lucie Ragin July 23, 2009 20 Conclusion of Interview http://collections.ushmm.org Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.