

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Marthe Cohn**  
**July 29, 1996**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Marthe Cohn, conducted on July 29, 1996 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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**MARTHE COHN**  
**July 29, 1996**

Question: Will you begin by telling me your full name, your date of birth and where you were born.

Answer: My name is Marthe Cohn. M-a-r-t-h-e, C-o-h-n. I was born on April 13, 1920 in Metz, which is in Northern France.

Q: And your maiden name?

A: My maiden name was Hoffnung, H-o-f-f-n-u-n-g.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family and your life before the war.

A: We were a very extended family. My grandfather on my mother's side -- I never knew my grandparents on my father's side, they died before I was born. But on my mother's side, my grandfather was one of the rabbis of Metz. And we were very orthodox. Very. Everything was done by the book. We never wrote on Saturday. We went to school because everybody had to go to school, but we were authorized not to write, and there were never tests given on Saturday. So I had -- my parents had eight children. One boy, the second boy died when he was 2 1/2, in 1914, 1919 from scarlet bifida. I never knew him. I wasn't born yet. And we were raised seven children. I had two older brothers, an older sister and three younger sisters.

Q: What kind of business was your father in?

A: My father had a photograph enlargement and framing business. He didn't make the pictures, but he enlarged and framed them for people. And my mother worked with him after I was about 8 or 9 at the time she started working with him.

Q: Well, how would you consider your lifestyle? Was it fairly comfortable?

A: Oh, we were not rich, but we never missed a dinner. We never were hungry or we always had clothes. We went to good schools. It was middle income, but not rich. My uncles, my mother's brothers, she had seven brothers. She was a young girl, and they were very rich but we were not.

Q: Your schooling, was it a public school . . .

A: Yes.

Q: Did you go to a Hebrew school, also?

A: Oh, yeah. I went to public school for first grade to graduation, and when you graduate it's about two years of college from the \_\_\_\_\_, which is -- do you want me to spell it? No, okay. And Ametz (ph), we were very young, when Ametz would come to the house and teach us to read, but not to write or to -- just reading. When I was little, I went to a hyper. And there was no separation between state and college, so we had a college teaching in school every week. And all religion had -- we had the \_\_\_\_\_, who was like a bishop. He was the rabbi of the whole area, the general area. And he taught us, and to Catholic it's a priest and to Protestant the ministers. We all have religious teaching because when Metz reverted to French rule in 1918, the French wanted to keep the \_\_\_\_\_ very happy. And they are very religious, so they accepted because France was always a state where religion and state were separate. But not in Lorraine de la Cross, it was a special thing.

Q: Being Jewish, were your friends Jewish or Catholic or mixed?

A: There were mostly Catholics and Jews. I had in that school there were quite a few Jews, but we were -- most of the kids were Catholic.

Q: I'm trying to get a sense of how integrated Jewish people were into the life of Metz, whether they had a separate community or whether you were all French.

A: No, no. We had special communities, religious. We were very religious anyway. And my grandfather had founded the \_\_\_\_\_, he had founded everything, you know, synagogues. He had founded everything for the \_\_\_\_\_, everything for the orthodox. Because \_\_\_\_\_ was a very -- let's see, I try to find the word. I see a little person in this synagogue at \_\_\_\_\_ which was outside the forbidden parts, so you see, that's the difference. But at the same time my parents and my grandfather were very open-minded, and we always had Catholic friends, too, and that was absolutely not following the \_\_\_\_\_.

Q: Were you aware of any anti-Semitism?

A: Oh, sure, sure. In that city were many Germans, and in '33 or a little before when Hitler started to get mighty, the Ukraines who were of German descent were very much anti-Semitic and showed

it openly. When until then they showed it not perhaps as openly. But in 1936 when Leon Blume (ph) came to power, you remember that? And he was Jewish, we had the First Minister a Jew. And then there were real high-ups due to that. And we, my sister and I -- my sister was definitely was \_\_\_\_\_, we had fistfights with the girls in schools about that because then they showed openly their anti-Semitism and we did not accept it. No, how can we be governed by a Jew? Things like that, so that we did not accept.

Q: You fought back?

A: Oh, yeah. I always fought. My father was a very, very strong person. Very authoritarian, but in the same way he did not accept. I remember when I was real small child -- I don't remember what age, but very small -- we came out of the synagogue, which was in the bad neighborhood. The synagogue was in the slums, and at that time there were lots of bad kids out there. Teenagers, and they started to call us dirty Jews and throw stone. And my father took his belt off and just went after them, and I was very proud of him. I think that's why I agreed to help.

Q: And that probably influenced you?

A: Possibly, yeah. But we were -- I don't know. My brothers and my sisters and I -- just my oldest sister, she was not the fighting kind. But all were natural -- in fact, we were on my father's side. Otherwise, we were much more like my mother, but for that we were like my father.

Q: What does that mean, more like your mother?

A: My mother was a very soft and very understanding and very -- she grew up with us. And my father, he was a authoritarian, he was a patriarch and that was that. There was a big difference between the two.

Q: Do you remember your parents saying anything to you about this anti-Semitism, how did they respond why . . .

A: Yes, sure. We discussed it -- I don't remember if it was '27, 1927 or '29. I don't remember the year when Schwartzmann or Schwartz-kopf, the general in France, the Russian general who had done so many pogroms in Poland and Russia. I don't remember if it was Poland, I think it was in Russia. \_\_\_\_\_ was a Russian, and he killed him in the streets of Paris. And every night I

remember my oldest brother reading the newspapers aloud to all the family at the table what had happened that day as a crime. And that had a terrible reparation on me. I wanted to become a lawyer, that was the goal of my life. To become a lawyer, but I remember very well the deep -- and I was so terrified that people could -- did not have pogroms. I didn't know much about it before that. And that gave me an inkling of what happened in this countries.

Q: Were there any social or political organizations you were involved with as a girl?

A: No, not really. I was very friendly with a Jewish group who had work in an organization, but I never belonged. I'm not very much of a believer to organizations. In general, I never in my life, you know, \_\_\_\_\_ and belonged to something. They were a group of -- I don't remember what they were. I tried to remember. It was a Jewish -- a Zionist group, I don't remember exactly.

Q: And your father, your brothers, they weren't involved with that either?

A: No, no.

Q: You started to mention to Hitler. How much did you know about what was going on in Germany at the time?

A: Oh, very much. We knew it every day. Since the age of 6, as soon I could read, I get the paper and read it. I was always and I am still very interested in people and things. And I keep abreast of what's going on, not just in my country but in every country. And we knew exactly what was going on, and we had relatives in Germany. My father had a sister in Germany, and they lived in Dusseldorf, which is not very far from Metz. And after Kristallnacht, the next morning, their daughter called us. It was her husband, the Germans came in, the SS Gestapo they came in and went to arrest him. And she had two small children. Jackie was by then about 3; another one, Josie, was about 2; and she was very pregnant with the third one. And by chance, she was able to talk them out of arresting him on the spot. And then as soon they left -- they were going to come back - - as soon as they left, he ran away to Holland. Because he had a brother there, but she stayed with the children. So she called us, and my older sister, Cecilia, went immediately by train to Germany and got the two children out. And she made heil Hitler until she had the baby and then she went with the baby to Holland. And we kept Jackie, the oldest one -- we kept during the whole war.

Because his parents later went on one of these ships who tried to go to Palestine, and they were all of them who wanted -- it took them forever to be able to land in Palestine. And once they landed, the war started, so they never were able to get their children. And Jackie lived with us and his brother, Josie, lived with my aunt, the sister of my father. But these were on my father's side. She was the sister of my father, I never met her. I never met my aunt. But I knew her, too, because of Jackie. I knew Jackie. She had come to France to see us, so Jackie -- when I talk about what happened during the war, he was always with us.

Q: Was there a number of German Jews who were coming west and moving into your area?

A: Oh, yeah. Very much so, and every Jewish family of Metz who was a German family during the time that they went -- you know, that they moved on, then after that they moved on. Because we were too close to Germany, nobody felt very comfortable there. So, oh, yes, I remember very well the family who came to stay with us. I don't remember their name, but I remember very well they were there. I don't remember how long, two weeks, and then they moved on. But we all helped.

Q: Is there anything else you want to tell me about Metz or your family or the kind of life you lived? Were you -- you were finishing up school at about the time of the war?

A: Before, I finished in '18. And I was 17 when I finished school, and we had a very extended family and we lived -- you know, we were very close to my grandparents. Very, very close to them. And my grandfather died on Passover, the eve Passover in '39. And that was a terrible thing for all of us, but in reality, we felt that he was lucky that he died then. Because he would never accept these \_\_\_\_\_ of shame. He did not wear the garb of the rebbitzin, but he was still looking like a rabbi. I have a picture of him I can show you later. You know, with the big, wide beard. He was a marvelous person. Very open-minded, very intelligent, very scholarly. After he died we received letters from Canada and from Australia where he had corresponded with other rabbis. He was a very scholarly person, he would write, he had beautiful manuscripts and manuscripts that you can never replace. And all that was disappeared, too, when the Germans entered. He was starting, in the morning, he got up at 4 o'clock to study. He was a very affectionate grandfather, and he had a great influence on me. And he was very open-minded. One morning we -- my oldest sister and I,

we stayed with our grandfather and grandmother, because they were elderly and they were alone. They only lived two or three blocks from our villa, so every night we stayed with them. And in the morning, he would get up very early like I told you, and we would prepare the breakfast for us. And one morning he said to us, "I noticed that you never say a prayer when you eat breakfast." And that's all he said, and from that day on when we started eating he went out. He never said it again, just to show what type of person he was.

Q: What were your plans when you were 18 or 19 years old after you finished school?

A: I didn't like school, I didn't like school at all. I finished because I needed to finish. But at that time I did not want to go on, and I started to work with my oldest sister who was making hats. She had learned the profession, and I was horrendous; I never was able to make a hat. I was very bad at it. Then the war started and we had to leave that city, so the hat business was dead anyway. But then during the war later, I went back to school, nursing school.

Q: Is that something that came to you later or was it something that you were always interested in?

A: No, I was always interested. I wanted to become a lawyer, but then I hated it, you see. I hated it ferociously for certain reasons. All my sisters had been fair students. I was not interested in studying what they were teaching me. I only interested in the country. I had read an awful lot. In French literature or any literature when the teacher always asked us, I'm sure nobody of you have read it, I had always read it. Or once upon a time I had read the book, because I read constantly. But then I was not interested in doing my homework and doing these things. So I really hated school because I knew every class the teacher would say to me, "How can you be such a student when all your sisters are so great students?" You know, and that did it, I hated it.

Q: Let me ask you one question before we continue. It's a curious thing to me, it sounds like you had a very strong Jewish facetiousness. On the other hand, you had a lot of Catholic friends.

A: Sure.

Q: Growing up in France and knowing what was starting to happen in Germany, Poland, did you feel you were protected as a French citizen just like everyone else, or did you feel separate as a Jew?



A: Oh, no. I felt absolutely like a French Jew. At that time I couldn't believe that we could be treated equally. First, I never thought we could lose the war. That was another reason. You know, we were sure we would win the war. The English and us, we would win the war. The Belgians and Dutch. You know, how can you even imagine that you are going to lose the war? And then there was whole year of -- almost not quite a year because it started I think in June -- I have troubling remembering months. But for almost a whole year there was no real war. You know, we were in \_\_\_\_\_ but nothing was occurring. The \_\_\_\_\_ line was one side; the Siegfried was on the other side and they were looking at each other but there was no real fighting going on. So we didn't know what was going on. And then suddenly it exploded, so that's how these things occurred.

Q: Why did your family leave Metz and where did you go?

A: Oh, okay. In '39 just before the war was declared, about a week before the war -- there was a government appealed to all the people from Metz who could afford to leave, to leave because we were so close to the border. I don't know how much, that's 20 miles, 25 miles? I cannot tell you exactly, but it's not much more than that if I'm mistaken. And so we left and we went to Pratique, because Pratique was the city where we were supposed to go. And on top of it my father had a brother in Pratique which made the thing even easier, so we went to Pratique. My two brothers were in the army then. My oldest brother was in \_\_\_\_\_, and my youngest brother had been drafted in Tunisia. The war started and he stayed in Tunisia. So they were gone so we, the girls, and my parents and Jackie, we went to Pratique.

Q: What was the life like in Pratique? What kind of town was it?

A: It was a complete different town. Metz in an industrial area, very industrial. It's steel -- do you know steel mines? A lot of foreigners, we had lots of ports and Italians were -- in the village was a whole, not in city Metz, but that gave Metz a very -- it was very -- I have to find my word -- progressive as a city. Politically, it was -- Metz was always very extreme right, okay? And the extreme right, all the newspapers of the extreme right, and they had two, were always eating -- we had an expression. We said they were eating Jew at every breakfast, you know. That was the expression. That was \_\_\_\_\_, and these type of newspapers. And Pratique in the country was

very agricultural area, the whole area. No industry whatsoever. Very backwoods. For people who came from an industrial area, you know, it's a big difference. But the people they didn't accept immediately when they didn't know you, but they were very friendly. But what happened after when we started to have trouble, they helped us tremendously and it was always at the risk of their lives. Because nothing could be done with the Jews without risking your life. You must have heard that by other people. You know, whatever little thing you would do for a Jew, you were risking your life if you were caught. And all these people risked their lives for people that they hardly knew sometimes. But because they felt it was whole, and they didn't even care about the Jews. You know, in Pratique, you know, I have to go back to that. Metz was the third largest Jewish community in France before the war. I don't know now, but before the war. Pratique had three -- I think three or four Jewish communes; that was all. We were there for a long time, but most people didn't even know how a Jew looked. But because they read certain papers, they heard certain things, they didn't like Jews. But when they saw what happened to us, then they did not -- I don't talk about all of them. You know, but the majority of people in Pratique did not agree this war was going, with what happened to us there. And that's why it is so hard.

Q: What is the general population of Poitiers?

A: It was about 40,000. I think 30 -- 20 to 40,000. I cannot remember, but it was a small -- much smaller town than Metz which was 60 or 70,000. So it was a much, much smaller town but a very old town. Very, very old. Going back to the Middle Ages, like Metz, too. Metz, too, is a very old town.

Q: Coming from a religious background, if there were so few Jews there, could you maintain your community?

A: Oh, sure. Because all the refugees from Metz came. So a whole community, even our rabbis which was not any more than -- he was Rabbi Eli Block (ph) who died -- who was imported with \_\_\_\_\_. And he was our rabbi for the last two or three years when I was in the [Lucerne], he became our teacher because he replaced the rabbi who had died. For example, he was in the German Army during the first war, and when I was six years old when he taught us the Bible, he

asked who were the bad people at the Tower of Babel. And I just looked at him, I didn't know he was in the German Army at the time, I was six. And I said to him, "The Germans." And when I came home and I told my parents, they said, "Oh, my God." He was a very good friend of my grandfather. When he needed a week's vacation, he would always call that uncle.

Q: We're going to change the tape.

A: Okay.

Q: So now unity was reconstituted in parts of Europe, somewhat?

A: Yeah, somewhat. Not quite, but there was quite a few people from Metz.

Q: Was the plan to just [inaudible] or what, did you have plans?

A: No, when the war started, you had to wait till you see what is going to happen. You cannot make plans under these conditions. So my brothers went away. My parents, we tried to survive. My oldest brother came back from on permission on furlough in wintertime before the war started. And he made us start a business there, my older sister and I. And we know was beyond Egypt. We started a business to make some kind of -- we had to live. We didn't want to be on welfare. That's something we -- so started a business, and it was \_\_\_\_\_, you know. And we had to start in women's clothing, but that was a little latter. That's after the Jabotinsky came in. But we did that to start something, to be okay and to be able to feed us. We were quite young. And on top of it, we had Germany -- and also Germany, that was a lot of difference, too. You know, also people when they came we had to be -- so everybody came, came to our house in Budapest; it was an open house. So we were -- and then the war started, and the Germans first were -- and there were refugees in the station all along the station. Thousands and thousands and thousands were killed. There was not a place, nothing. And they were just flying over us and just throwing bombs. And before we started the business and then after, too, we helped the refugees. My sister and I went -- my sister, Steph -- I call her Steph. But Stephanie and I, we went down always to the station and helped the refugees. And so we helped a lot of young people. And there I have a story, when the Bishop came to see us, the Bishop of Pratique. And he give me his ring to kiss, and I said, "Sir, I don't kiss it. I'm Jewish." And he said, "\_\_\_\_\_. You should kiss my ring anyway." And I said I would never do it. And he

was very upset, but I didn't kiss it. So, these are the kind of things for children. You know, I would go to church and my parents didn't mind at all that I go to church. But I would never -- but we had a church across the street, and when it was started, they had a huge \_\_\_\_\_, it was like a \_\_\_\_\_ to me. It was a bigger -- you know, it was really extremely colorful and beautiful music and all that. I loved to go and see that, but I never thought -- that never influenced my thinking. But it isn't -- and I took, when my children were bigger, I took them to church. It's an experience for them also as Jews. I never -- you know, I never closed my mind to that, even after the war. After all what happened, I cannot be closed-minded. Do not be only -- have one view of things. There is not just one view of things, it's a human wisdom, that's how I feel.

Q: So what was this in . . .

A: That was when the Germans started to the war, but before the Germans entered, several days before -- I cannot tell you how many. Several days before the Italian came on the absolutely defenseless city and killed thousands and thousands of people. And there we had something very strange happened. I had just called -- because at that time we were living in that house on a hill above the station, much above the station. They were not hurt because the station was in a valley, and there was a hill on that side and then there is a hill on that side. It's very hilly. And I had just crossed the bridge, the bridge for people. You know, from -- I have to think -- for people to walk, not for cars, but \_\_\_\_\_ had just crossed it, and I was on the other side of the station when the bombardment took place. I was not at that time taking care of the refugees that day. I was going to the store after lunch. And when that happened, I only thought about -- when the bombardment was over, I only thought about one thing, to run home and tell my mother I was alive. Which she didn't know where it was, but she knew that there was a bombardment. So I crossed that bridge back, I was the only one crossing it. And I didn't think about it, and there were trains of munitions and there were people from the railroad, walkers, who were making signs, "Don't cross. Don't cross." But I was just coming. I wanted to tell my mother I was okay. That's all I thought, I didn't realize that I -- or I don't think I realized it. So I went home and I told my mother, but during that time my

sister was looking for me because she had been somewhere else. And she was -- she went to all the hospitals to see if I had been hurt, because she didn't find me. And I was home, so . . .

Q: This must have been fairly frightening.

A: Oh, I was terribly frightened of the bombardment. Once they were bombarding, I was -- I never had lived through one before. I was extremely terrified. I wanted to be a smaller thing. I'm not very large, but as small as I could. There were old people running to houses, and I just wished the whole town -- you know, to hold me in their arms. That house wasn't destroyed, but it could happen. It was very close, but just at the beginning of the street. I don't remember what street, where it was. And then there was a second bombardment, just that I don't remember when. But I know there was a second bombardment, and then that was the end of that and Germany came in. But the Italians they were absolutely, you could see the pilots so low they were flying. Of course, they had not very sophisticated planes at that time, and you could see the bombs just coming out. That was my first experience with war.

Q: Did you expect this at all?

A: No, no. I was so indignant because I felt that they were so cowards to bombard the city without defense. When there were military people, ammunition in the station, you know, going through, but there was nothing to defend the city. And they knew that, they wanted us to be just so petrified that we accept the Germany Army when they come in. It was a psychological warfare. There was no reason, no tactical reason to do that. There was not industry; there was nothing there.

Q: Do you remember the date?

A: It was several days before the Germans entered. I cannot tell you exactly when.

Q: Was it like in May 1940?

A: May -- yeah, May or June -- I cannot remember. Do you know I cannot remember if it was May or June? But it took about until June until the Germans came as far as Bastille, because they went to Elgin. It went fast, but still. Once they went -- they never hit the Russians. They were grounded. Then they came down south where there was no defense. And the French Army and the English Army were unable to fight them, first because the government was unbelievably bad. It was a very,

very cowardly government. And then the second reason was that our army was not trained for that. They were thinking that it was a war like in 1914, '18 and not for 1940. And De Gaulle had told them what they should do, but they never listened to anything -- they know this. Do you know his book was read by Hitler, and he used it? But see, the French didn't know. They were never very good -- how do you call that? In your own country, you are recognized for what you are.

Q: So describe to me when the Germans came in, what that was like.

A: I was walking the streets with my older sister, Sissie, and we sort of felt Germans, what do you say, we just felt them coming. And I told my sister, "I wish I could kill them." And at that time -- at that moment in time, they didn't get killed but they fell, and I couldn't believe it. I said, "Did I do it?" I didn't do it. It just happened, a coincidence. But that was my first German I saw. In the beginning it was horrible. You know, I have to experience something. You know, before the war I was very idealistic. I was an absolute pacifist. I only think war cannot do anything for us. War cannot help anybody, what I thought at that time. But when I saw the Germans' picture in the Champs Élysées in Paris, you know, parading, that is when it just took a hold at last. And from that day on, I think we have to get out. But in the beginning I couldn't do anything much. But in the very beginning when the Germans, they were very polite. They were extremely -- in France. They did not behave that way in Poland or Russia or wherever or Czechoslovakia, but in France they had orders and they were extremely polite. And they were even courteous, and they had rules. So they did not bother us the first few months, but we didn't press them. We knew that they could not stay like that forever. But we didn't know what would happen, we were just waiting. And then my brother who was in Majdanek, he was in prison. He was a prisoner of the Germans in Majdanek. And his cousin, too, from \_\_\_\_\_. He was able to escape from there, and he walked through Alsace, it was wintertime. And he was made prisoner in June or May -- I don't remember, but he was a prisoner until about December. And then in December he was able to escape, and he crossed over there by foot because he had no way of going. He had civilian clothes, but he had no papers. All his military papers would show that he was a POW. And then he arrived finally in Alsace, where he had a business -- he had a very good business there. So he told all his clients, he called

them and told them he was there and he sold everything. He had a men's fashion store. You know, they had all custom-made costumes. They made suits and things like that. So he sold everything he had in his store -- so we got some money, we lived on that. He is the one who really helped to hold together \_\_\_\_\_ and he came to Pratique finally. After Helsinger, he was able to take a train and he came to Pratique, and he stayed a month in Pratique with us and he met my sister-in-law who was my best friend. And they got in love, first time. First night. And we knew that could be very serious. Then he tried to escape with a cousin who was German, who was living with us, too. They were caught by a German patrol when they tried to cross into French Vichy. Because my brother's plan was to go to Vichy, France. Go to Spain and go to \_\_\_\_\_. But he was caught then and he was in prison for months. But the Germans were -- that was still at the time when the Germans were not nasty yet. They did not -- they looked at these people, but did not see that he was a prisoner of war. Because if he was not a prisoner of war, he'd be dead. But there was no people's organization, so they should have understood. Luckily for him, they did not see, they never noticed that Oscar was a German citizen. So they both were months in prison and then they came out. Then they went back again. They escaped again. And the way they escaped is how the same place where they escaped at a later time. But they escaped, then my sister-in-law must know. My sister-in-law, she went with her friends to join him, and she told him that she had to \_\_\_\_\_ or we get married; that's it. So they got married. They never went to Luck. But they stopped at the . . .

Q: We'll talk about that later.

A: Right. But I come back to Batik, so my oldest brother was going to Vichy, France, and we stayed in Batik.

Q: Let me ask you a question first. How quickly was the country divided between Vichy and . . .

A: Immediately, immediately. As soon as the government of France signed whatever. Do you know -- I don't know if you call that an armistice or a peace, but at that time it was immediately. And we were just a few kilometers from the line which divided French, occupied in French -- Batik. And then my second brother, Arnold, went to Tunisia, he went south, and immediately and he joined my brother in \_\_\_\_\_. My brother by then was married to my sister-in-law, and when we

stayed \_\_\_\_\_, our store with clothes that the Germans came in '41, beginning '41. I cannot remember the time. And so we had nothing, nothing -- no income anymore. But my brother was helping us. He gave us all the money we needed to live on. And I started to work in the city hall, in a French office of dealing with the Germans. You know, they gave us all the requisitions, what they want from us and we had to deliver. And I was one in that department, that French office which dealt with the Germans constantly.

Q: You spoke German?

A: Oh, I speak fluently. In Metz, we always spoke German and French. My parents until 1918, people had no right to speak French. My father was arrested by the Germans in 1917 or '18 and put in prison for a few days because they said, "Your neighbor said that you have spoken French." The poor man didn't even know what was French. So he was in prison but he was released because they understood that he didn't speak any French, so he couldn't have done it.

Q: Now, when you were working in this office, did they know you were Jewish?

A: Oh, no. The Germans? No, they didn't know it. They never asked. That was before they were all -- you know, the yellow star and all that, that was before. I worked there several months and it was friendly because the Germans were telling me that I was a real German, and I was from Metz and I had the German name. And I was very blonde with light eyes and light skin, so they think I'm a real German. And they felt that I should come to Germany, so they offered me jobs, you know, in government in Germany if I wanted to. And I said no, and I told some of them that I was Jewish. And two or three of them, when I told them I am Jewish, they didn't care. But only two of them, and then I lost my job. You know, because the government did not accept any more -- the Germans did not accept any more of the Jews at work. But we still didn't wear the yellow star, but much earlier -- I don't remember when either, but much earlier -- they had an edict that all Jewish fathers had to come and declare the whole family. If not, we would be killed. So my father like all fathers went to declare his own family. It was pretentious not to for him, and we never discussed it even. He just went because he felt he had to do it, and who was to think that we would be killed? So that's how it seems, so we were declared but we had no star yet.



Q: So what sort of restrictions were there?

A: Oh, the restrictions on Jews started after the war started with the Russians. Then is when it really started. You know, say where the restrictions -- I cannot remember, but real restrictions, the yellow star and all that, really started after the war started with the Russians. Because when I was working at that French office at the city hall, I know I was not wearing the yellow star. And I know that, you know, that I remember. All that happened after, so I know that these things occurred. And the Russian -- the war with the Russians started at that time, when I was in that office. So I know that everything started with that. That much, I am sure.

Q: So that was June of '45?

A: Yeah, I cannot -- do you know I have trouble remembering dates? But anyway then . . .

Q: So up until this time there was no restriction on your movements or anything you wanted to do?

A: No. That started once we had the yellow star and all that. But they had closed our store like they did before. Because I went to the -- that they had closed the store already. Because we had to declare what was a Jewish store. That they had done already because if not, I would not have been working in the office. So I know that that had already occurred. But even then we were helped by so many people who came to us and said, "You can hide your stuff in our homes." And they gave it back, they gave it back after the war. And the girls transported some suitcases with what we had in the store, you know. Because it took many -- and the funny thing was one of the Germans helped us carry the suitcases. Because they felt, "Oh, Mädchen, you can't carry that suitcase. It's too heavy for you." So they helped us.

Q: When you talk about the restrictions after the war started with Russia, other than the Jewish star, what sorts of things?

A: Every day there was a edict read. Every day an edict on the walls for us and it was always punished by death. Everything was verboten. But always punishment was never something else than death. We had edicts put on the walls; every day there were new edicts. First, we had no right to go to a store and buy food or anything else until 4 o'clock in afternoon. We had to wear the yellow star so we were recognized immediately. And if you did not have the yellow star sown on

your clothes, you were arrested. One of my younger sisters was just a little girl was arrested by a German with the SS, and he brought her home. And he said to my mother, "If I find her once more without the star attached," -- not safety pin, but, you know, how do you call it? I cannot remember the word in English. You know, one goes into the other? Well, do you know you sew one on top and one underneath and you put them . . .

Q: Snap?

A: A snap, yeah. She had put snaps on, because we had to change every day and then we had to sew it on. So she felt -- she put it on the snaps everywhere. So he told my mother if she had snaps one more time, "I kill her." But luckily [inaudible] , so he brought her home. And she was 14, 13, something like that. But at that time they did not arrest Germans. They arrested what they called the poor \_\_\_\_\_ , which that was just, you know, that was just a joke. It was the French were next. But once the population can see, if only that's \_\_\_\_\_, they don't for French citizens. Then they stopped the French, too, after. So I lost my job in the city hall. I was -- the gendarmes came in. They were German's gendarmes, and they came in and they said, "All Jews out." And on the spot, you had to pay and pick up your things. And my chief tried to keep us, we were three Jewish girls and no way. We were all from Metz, because we all spoke German even, that's why. So they did not let us \_\_\_\_\_. They were sure we'd leave, so that was that. So after that I had to find something else to do, and in between I had left my fiancé, and he was a medical student. And then one day just talking, I say to him, "What about the \_\_\_\_\_?" And from that moment on, I had no chance at all. I had to do it. I had no more chance; I had to do it because I had gotten -- I had found the idea that was the right thing to do. So that's what happened, so that's why I went into Nazi . . .

**End of Tape 1.**

## Tape 2

Q: You were starting to tell me about some of the restrictions there were on Jewish people. I don't know if there were any restrictions on French people, but . . .

A: Not the same. There were restrictions. For example, there was -- how do you -- oh, I cannot find the word. Do you know at a certain hour of the night you had to be in. Strange because I know these words, but I cannot remember it. But anyway, for us the restrictions were unbelievable, and they changed every day. They added some every day. I told you we had no right to go into a store before 4 o'clock. 4:00 or 4:30, I don't remember exactly, but about that time. And at that time, there was nothing left because everybody had coupons to buy everything. You couldn't buy things freely; there was nothing to be had freely, even milk or butter or whatever. Eggs, you had to have coupons for everything. So -- but we were very lucky because my mother was very liked by all the people where she brought things for the family. And they told her not to worry, all of them told her not to worry. That any time she wants something, to let them know and they will have things ready for her, put her away for her for after 4 o'clock. So we never missed anything. We were never -- we always had enough food. Like also other French; there was not too much, but we had as much as all the other French people. We had never missed, and then they were also restriction you had no right to have a radio. You had no right to have a telephone. You could not use a public telephone. You couldn't go into any public space like the Post Office. You had no right -- the wife of the Rabbi Eli Block I mentioned before, she went into the Post Office and make a phone call. And she was arrested with her little girl and taken to the Gestapo, and the rabbi went and tried to -- he always discussed things with the Germans. He was an organizer, and he spoke German very well, too. So he always talked with the community, but there he talked for his wife and child. So they arrested him, too. But that was after we left. Before we left, he was still around, okay. And he had organized -- the children were in the camp. There was a camp in Batik, the outskirts of Batik, that the children in the camp can get out and be kept by a family, you know. So he had a little boy, too: Padova

(ph). I cannot remember his first name, but his last name was Padova. And his parents were deported, and he stayed with us. But at night the rabbi had a place where they all -- all these kids were sleeping. They were in our house in daytime; they came home from school, came to our house. We fed them and we did their homework with them. We took care of them like a child of our family, and when Padova, the little boy, he was about 11 -- when he noticed that we were going to leave, when he heard that, he begged us to take him with us. And we went to the rabbi and told him everything. What should we do? And he said, "You cannot take him with you. If you take Padova, all the children will be arrested." We still were at that time following the orders because we thought -- we never thought that they were all going to be killed anyway, so what's the difference? You know, at least you've saved one. But we didn't understand that, we had no idea what was. We knew it was bad, but we never imagined how bad it was at the time. It was impossible to imagine that. Until the end of the war, we never knew what was going on, even if my own sister was deported. We never knew. So that was -- but before Padova, the story of Padova that was just when we left. Before that my sister was arrested at home at dinnertime because she had done things for the underground, but personally we never belonged to the underground. We never belonged to Reseau, what we call it, Reseau. That means a group of underground. But we did a lot of things. For example, we didn't even know where they came from, but people would ring our bell and say, "We know that you -- we have heard that you can help us cross the water." So we helped them cross the water by sending them to a farmer where my brother had crossed the second time, my two brothers had crossed and successfully. That farmer in -- I don't remember the village where he was, but that farmer had a farm which was ascribed both lines. You know, you could go on his land you went on both sides, so it was a very good way to cross. I even crossed there in '41, I crossed there to go to see my brother in -- no, not in Arlise. St. Marie De Mare (ph). They were just married and my sister-in-law was pregnant, and I went to see them for the summer. Do you realize that we lived as normally as possible, we did not let these Germans stop us from walking on. That was after I lost my job. I think it was after I lost my job in the city hall, and I had not registered. I had not started nursing

school yet. So that's when that happened, so that was in '41. And yeah, because my nephew was born in February '42, so -- I've got remember where I was.

Q: Well, question: When you got help from these farmers who let people get across, did you have to pay them anything?

A: No, no. Nothing, they didn't accept any money. These people did it just to be helpful. And that happened, one of the persons my sister helped, I helped her -- we were both doing it. But we helped one person cross, and that person had forgotten in our house his tobacco card, which was valuable, very valuable for bartering. Because if you didn't smoke, then you could barter it for other things. Food, for other things. So he wrote to us and asked him to send him the card, and my sister sent him the card through the farmer. We couldn't communicate with France -- okay, unoccupied France directly, but we sent that to the farmer who sent it on the other side in a mailbox to the south of France. And that letter was caught, and she did a terrible mistake. We never understood, she signed her real name which we never did. We knew as much, that you never signed a letter. And why did she do it that day? We don't know, but she signed the letter. And during the day, the day she was arrested, the farmer's son, one farmer's son came to the house from his farm which was perhaps 12 kilometers from Poitiers, I don't know exactly, by bicycle, to warn us that a German had gotten that letter, had arrested his father and his oldest brother and were questioning them. And his father didn't know who Stephanie Hoffnung, so we knew that, so we didn't even think that she should escape. You know, she stayed there. And at night at dinnertime, because every night, that was another restriction -- every night after sundown, the Germans would come and make an appeal to see if we were all present. To make sure we are there every night, the SS. And that night an SS we had never seen before, a \_\_\_\_\_, which means a noncommissioned officer, a horrible looking guy. He was very taller than I, horrible. He came with two other guys, two other SS and they arrested my sister. We were eating, you know. And Jackie was at the table. We were eating cherries, we were at the dessert; we were eating cherries. And Jackie took out -- he was about four, five at the most, I don't remember what age exactly. About five at the most, he took out the pits and threw them at

the Germans, and I looked at him. And in front of the Germans, I said to him in French, I said, "Jackie, a Frenchman is always polite. Never doubt that." I was afraid they kill that kid. So he didn't do it anymore, but the Germans didn't do anything against him. But they arrested my sister, they were satisfied with that. They took her away, and then about two hours later, they came back and arrested my father. But they released him several hours later, and my father tried to help my sister but there was nothing he could do. They wanted her to tell them that she had written to that farmer, because that farmer was helping people cross and she said she doesn't know anything about it. She cannot tell them, she maintained that. And they told her that she's fresh, and they told my father that they keep her because he raised her bad and she's fresh. And that's what killed her, because she would absolutely not say anything against the farmer. She would have died before she did. She died because of it. And the farmer was released because they had no proof. So she was kept in prison for one month. She became 21 in prison in Pratique on the 10th of July she became 21. And then she was deported to -- she was moved to -- no, she was first in a camp in Poitiers, in the outskirts of Poitiers there was a camp. And she was in that camp, and that's why we escaped because we hoped that she could escape, too. We had arranged help that she could escape because until then, she had several times the opportunity to escape. And she wouldn't because she was organizing everything of the camp. In prison, too, she had been a leader. Prisoners who were not Jewish came to see us after they were released, political prisoners. And they told us what a great leader she is and how she kept morale of everybody up, and that she, you know, organized the prison, how to behave in prison. How to do everything. And she did the same, she was the most educated in that camp, as much as I can tell and she took over the whole organization. And she told us, because we have the guard who we knew very well. He was one of the kids who had walked with us to the station. You know, when we helped the refugees. And we were very, very friendly, and he accepted her to make her escape, but she said she couldn't do that because of the people would be killed. The Germans always told them if they tried to escape, they would kill her. But the guards were French, the Germans came in only every morning. But at night there was no guard -- no German, so the

French guard wanted to make her escape and he would have escaped with her, not to be arrested. But she refused them, but later she understood what mistake it was. But then I had organized everything; she was a medical student. I was a nurse, a student nurse in that hospital. My fiancé was a medical student, and her boyfriend was a medical student, all in that same university. And all my classmates were ready to help, everybody helped us there. First, when I was accepted in that school, nobody -- when I told them, you know, I'm Jewish, they said, "Who cares? That has no meaning for us." You know, the French administration, the directors of the school, the picture I showed you earlier of my classmates, the directors of the school and our instructor in that picture, too. And they said, "We couldn't care less. You are French person. You want to come in nursing school, you come in nursing school." And they accepted me, and I was protected there. When Germans came to arrest patients, it was Catholic nuns who directed the transport. The school was a Red Cross school, which was separate. But we all, you know, did all our work, practical work in the hospital, and the hospital of the university was by then at that time completely run by the Catholic nuns. And the Catholic nuns would be warned if the Germans were arriving and they hid me, so that they don't see me. Because the director of the hospital said to me, "You are not going to wear the yellow star in the hospital. I don't want to see it." And I didn't wear it, but they knew that they would arrest me because I don't wear it. That was already the best punishment, just for that. So they hid me every time that the Germans came to arrest people, take them to the stations in the barracks. You know, old people, young people, whatever they -- whoever they wanted, not just Jews but whoever they felt they should arrest. It was enough that somebody tell them it's a Communist, even if it was absolutely not true, then they would arrest. But my sister then she -- we had arranged, I had seen one of the doctors at the hospital. And we had arranged that she wasn't feeling well, she had a kidney problem, a serious kidney problem and he knew that. So I had discussed that with him, and he agreed that if she is coming to the hospital the morning we were escaping, then he would treat -- the hospital and then he didn't know anything else, but all my classmates, her boyfriend -- my fiancé said -- as soon she arrives in the hospital, they get her out and get her across the border. But unfortunately,

the morning she was supposed to be there, she was supposed to go to the hospital, the little SS came. And when he -- you Ametz appealed to her to stand there for hours. He -- seven people were on the side to go to the hospital, and he said to them, "Nobody goes to the hospital." That was a combination, because after that they knew we had gone, so then she had no more chance. So that was it. So from the camp of Poitiers, she was later sent to Drancy, and from Drancy she was sent to Pithiviers, which is between Paris and Orleans. And from Pithiviers, she was deported on the day of Yom Kippur, 8-42 to Auschwitz. And we know she went to Auschwitz because I have the book saying that her convoy went to Auschwitz in three days. And we got cards; after the war was finished, her boyfriend had received a card that she had smuggled out on the day of Yom Kippur. It was a nurse of the camp, and the card said she couldn't write to us. But she wrote to him, and he was in Poitiers. And she -- which isn't very far from Pithiviers, and that card -- he gave me that card when he met me after the war. And in that card, she told that they are leaving, the morale excellent. They prayed and fasted all day on Yom Kippur; they didn't know how much fasting they would do afterwards. And she was deported that day. She wrote to us that she would try by all means, we had the code to make little points on those certain letters. The Germans, if they had found the card with that, would have absolutely known what the code means. They would have broken the code in no time, but she wrote, "I will sabotage my work as much as I can." She didn't realize, we didn't know what was going on. It was unbelievable. But anyway, she was deported, but in between we decided to leave so that she can escape. And because that things were getting worse and worse, so we knew it was time. It was right after I was a graduate of the first year of nursing, and all my classmates helped. Everybody helped. My fiance helped. The neighbors helped, they came and took our belongings out of the house with their bicycles. We got everything back after the war, but one family didn't -- was not honest. But, otherwise, they all would give us back everything we left. You know, all that was risking their lives, and the night before we left -- oh, I have first to talk about something else. Several weeks earlier, a man I had worked with at the city hall, I knew him but not very much. His name is Albert Charpentier, C-h-a-r-p-e-n-t-i-e-r, and his wife, I have paper here telling me



the name of his wife who died, too, now. And not -- his son, but I can show you the paper later. And it said Mr. Charpentier came to the house and told me -- because he knew me -- and said, "I know that you need peoples without those damn Jews." Because on top of it, all of our identity cards had the stamp Jew. So he said, "I have to" -- "I can give you cards for everybody in your family." And I asked him how much it would cost, and his response was to say, "How can you ask me how much it can cost? Such a thing, you don't pay for. I do it because that's what I believe in." And he was a poor man, he was not a rich man at all at that time. And he did it, he gave us cards and that's why we could escape. Because as long we had the Jew stamped, we could not walk anywhere, couldn't go out of the city. So he saved the life of my whole family, and for -- he didn't -- but I have to say that. I forgot. That Mr. Charpentier since he was very young had worked for one of the three or four Jewish families who lived in Poitiers for a long time and had a store. And he was there, and he loved them because they had always been extremely nice to him. And he told me how I will never forget what the Forshan (ph), that's the name of the Jewish family, who survived. They were not deported. What's -- undoubtedly, he did cards for them, too. Never asked, but the Forshan, I'll never forget what they did for me and my family and what I can do for Jews, you're all French and I will do that for you peoples. I want you to be safe. I cannot accept that that will be. And that's what we heard. You know, when we walked in the street when we start to wear the star, old men -- very proper old men, you know, because they used to love the little nobility in Poitiers. I told you it's a very backwoods country, very right wing. They would cross the street towards us to come on your side. They salute us and say, "We do not agree." Constantly, it was not just an accident; it was constant. Not everybody did, but it happened many, many, many times. They would come to my mother who spoke no -- very little French, because in Metz my parents were raised in Germany. They were not raised -- they spoke beautiful German. That's why we all spoke German, and with my parents we never spoke French. We spoke German, but sisters and brothers, we all spoke French. We never spoke German and we never do. But at table we would go from one language, and my parents understood what we were saying. For a long time we didn't know that,

and we thought we can say things we shouldn't. And then when they would discover what that's about, but that was when we were teenagers. But my parents spoke French, they understood it but they spoke comically. It was not what it should have been because they learned it when they were adults and they never went to school. My mother was very educated in German, but not in French. My father was not very educated, he knew how to read and write and more than that, but he was not educated like my mother. He didn't come from the same background, so it was a different -- and he had lost his mother when he was three years old. So it was a complete different way of life. But I come back to Poitiers. The night before we . . .

Q: Actually, before you move on, may I ask you a couple of questions?

A: Sure.

Q: You mentioned that the Germans would come in and arrest people. Was this a common thing on the streets and in businesses that there were a lot of arrests or deportations in Poitiers?

A: They did not do it so much in the streets. They arrested people, yes. They arrested people in the streets, but they always tried in the streets at the beginning, the very beginning, to make it very quiet, peaceful. But in the houses, they came at night when nobody had the right to be in the street. You know, after curfew. That's the word I was looking for. After curfew. So people were not in the streets, they didn't know. But when my sister was arrested, I don't know it happened, all my friends knew it in a few minutes and several came with their bicycles at the risk of their lives, because it was curfew, to see who was arrested. They knew one of the girls, Hoffnung, was arrested, but they didn't know which. But anyway, they wanted to express their, you know, their sympathy and help us if they could. And I had one good friend in my class who liked me a lot, and she came and just embraced me and said, "Oh, my God, I'm so happy. I was afraid it was you." And I almost killed her, I was so mad. I said, "How can you say that when it's my own sister who got arrested?" I was so horrified that she said that, and she felt terrible but she said, "Don't you realize that I know you, I don't know her much?" But I felt that it was atrocious, what she said. So this type of things happen.

Q: So you were trying to live as normal a life as possible, but clearly this wasn't very normal.

Did you feel safe?

A: No, we didn't feel safe, but that's why we escaped. Mostly, we felt unsafe until my sister was arrested, because we wanted her to be able to get out of there. I went to that -- my mother asked me constantly to go and see that little Hipp, was the filthy SS, his name was H-i-p-p. And to see him and try to convince him to get my sister out and I tried, but he told me the last time I talked to him -- it was in the street because when I went to the office of the SS, he wouldn't even accept to see me. But in the street I met him and I went to him, and he said, "Mädchen, if you come one pace closer to me, I have you arrested." So what could I do? It was no help if I got arrested. My family needed me, too. So I would have traded with my sister with pleasure, but I could not be arrested on top of her because what would have happened to my family then? I organized the whole departure from Poitiers then.

Q: We've got to change the tape.

A: What?

Q: Change the tape . . .

Q: Could I just before we start -- oh, yeah, I know. I was asking her a couple of questions.

A: About Poitiers before we left.

Q: Correct. Before you leave?

A: Yeah.

Q: Just, by the way, did you -- when your sister was arrested and she was a prisoner, then she was in Pithiviers?

A: First in the camp and then to Drancy and Pithiviers.

Q: Did you have any communication with her during this period?

A: In Poitiers? In prison we couldn't see her, they wouldn't let us, but when she went to the camp, we could visit her in the camp and we did visit her in the camp. It was all day, it was manned by the French, and at night -- only in the morning did the Germans come to make appell

and give all the bad orders and, you know, do all the stupid things they had to do, they wanted to do.

Q: What was the name of that camp? Did it have a name?

A: I don't remember a name. We called it Cote de Poitiers (ph) . I don't know if that's the name; my brother told me something and I forgot.

Q: What was it like from your . . .

A: It was, you know, like a camp. It was with barbed wire and entrance, but it was only French people. When we had the right to visit, there were only French guards, and they were not nasty to the camp -- to the people in the camp.

Q: The conditions weren't bad?

A: How can conditions be good in a camp? We brought the food. We had the right to bring food. There were cousins there, too, you know. Cousins of my mother. One cousin of my mother was in that camp, too. And I tell you, when we talked to her, she always had the marvelous morale. Or at least she made believe she had a marvelous morale. She always said things are good, "I am going to get this done." She always talked about doing the most harm to the Germans she can do. That's all she had in mind.

Q: You talked a little bit about helping people get to the unoccupied France.

A: Right.

Q: Do you have any sense of -- that mostly was just showing them where to go and where to cross?

A: No, no. We sent them, we didn't show them. We didn't take them there, but we gave them -- not a map, but we explained to them how to go there, and we got in touch always with the farmer and told him they're coming. They couldn't, he wouldn't have accept to just take people without knowing who they are. But if they were recommended by us, he would do it.

Q: How many people do you think you helped?

A: I don't know exactly, I cannot remember. Perhaps 10. Then my whole family, but not the same place. Because after my sister was arrested, that farm was -- that was not anymore \_\_\_\_\_, I don't know if that's English.

Q: One other question before you continue: I'm curious what the French attitude was toward the Vichy government?

A: Oh, that's very important. In the very beginning, very beginning, Vichy -- Pétain was considered like a god. You know, he was a hero of first world war. I cannot stand him, and I know why he was a hero. His main reason to be a hero is because there were riots in the trenches and he had the people shot. You know, the people rioting, the people who were rioting in the trenches for so many years. And instead of trying to make life easier, he just had shot certain number of them, and that riot was over, okay? He became a hero due to that; that's not a hero for me as a general. He was not as specific -- Jaffa and Frisch were not better generals than he was. But I talk about names that people in America don't know much about. These were our big generals for World War I, but Pétain had a reputation. And, you know, once people believe in a man, they think he cannot do anything wrong. So in the beginning, he confused many, many French people who thought that they had to go along with Pétain. But slowly, slowly people start to understand, mostly when the Germans behaved like that in occupied France, how horrible that was. And in unoccupied France, and then anyway, in '42 I think November if I remember, once were in unoccupied France, once the Americans landed in North Africa, all France was occupied, even the South of France. Everything was occupied by the Germans, but they never, never were able to make the same orders in the north. We had identity cards for Jews. I didn't and my family didn't anymore because we had changed our cards. But I think that that's what is ahead, I cannot even -- I am not even sure that they have to stamp Jew, but I think. But nobody, nobody ever wore a yellow star in the South of France. Even after the Germans were there, nobody. We were not deprived of going in stores. We had nothing of this type of restrictions, but the Jews were arrested. And some elements in the police helped the Germans because of Vichy, because Vichy gave them the orders and they were the bosses. And, you know, when you

are somebody who's under these type of bosses, many people do what they are told to do even if they don't completely agree. Now, there were many who did not agree and helped the Jews and the other people. There were not only Jews that were arrested in the South of France. The regular citizens were arrested, too. But anyway, that's another question. But the country [tape skipped] . . .

Q: Until?

A: Until they started to believe in the De Gaulle. You know, De Gaulle saved us. By going to England and by making that marvelous speech. By making that marvelous speech, you know. "France has lost the battle, but has not lost the war," something like that. I cannot repeat word by word. Something that is -- and after that, the French started to think. And then when the Germans were starting to have covered Russia, they became much worse with the whole French population, then a lot of French people started to convert completely and forget about Vichy and not want to have anything to do with the pope. You know, and help the other side, but it took a little while. Because it's so difficult when somebody you believe in takes a command and says that's the right thing. You know, in every country you will have that. Even now here, if Clinton says something about -- let's see, about a bomb having exploded by terrorists, in the beginning everybody would follow him. And then slowly some people would criticize him if he goes too far and gives too many plastic orders. You know, that's what you have to see how things go in context. It's very complicated. But, for example, the class I was in called \_\_\_\_\_. And I told my classmates I don't believe in \_\_\_\_\_, but they were horrified. "How can you not believe in \_\_\_\_\_?" I was the only Jewish student there, and they accepted me very well. But at the same time, they said, "How -- it's so difficult to be a nurse. To take care of patients. To be completely at the service of patients. It's so difficult. How can somebody who is not Christian," they asked me, "do that?" And I said, "Don't you realize that Jews have high morals, too?" And I knew a lot about religion because my grandfather and my brother taught me a lot. And I said, "The moral questions, we believe in the same things as you do." And I tell them always, "Don't you realize that Jesus was Jewish?" And, you know, French people didn't believe

that. It wasn't told to French kids at that time. Even later the Catholic Church 99 percent -- 97 percent of the population is Catholic, and the Catholic Church did not teach that at the time, that Jesus was Jewish. It was written in every church, you know, Jesus, the King of Judea, but they didn't understand that. Because they put it in Latin so people didn't know that. So it's a very complicated thing, but slowly the French people took hold of them, and they understood how hard it was to accept that the Germans do whatever they want. And the more the German became, the more the French felt. When I say "the French," I mean the majority of French. I don't mean the whole country. There was always an element who went along with the Germans. The Milles, for example. You know, the Milles was like a militia, but the Milles was an army of French people who were for Pétain, and they followed the Germans. They went even to fight with the Germans in Russia, that was a good thing. Anyway, do you want me to go back to when I left Poitiers?

Q: Yeah. I have one other question that may not be relevant at this point.

A: Sure. Go ahead.

Q: During this period, you were trying to help people and life wasn't very easy for you either. Did you notice any difference between a man or a woman that was advantageous or was just advantageous for them?

A: We always felt at that time that men were much more in danger than we were. The Jewish men. And all of the men, we thought so. But in reality, the Germans arrested the woman and tortured and killed the women the same way -- and children, as men. So that was, you know, at that time we had still ideas that army, the soldiers are killed. The men are killed, but women or civilian are not touched. But that wasn't true at all. We learned very fast that that didn't apply. So it was a general condition for everybody.

Q: Being a woman, was it easier to do some of your rescue work?

A: I don't think so. No, because many men did it, too. Many men. And when we left, men helped us. So I don't think it was easier, and it was -- just happened who was a woman and who

was a man and was in a situation to help. I don't think there was a question of gender there. I don't believe that.

Q: Tell me about your escape and who all went with you and how you traveled.

A: Okay. When we decided that my sister was going to try to escape the next day from the hospital and we had to leave, so we made plans to leave. And everything, like I told you before, was taken out of the house. And we were going just to sleep there. It was a big house in the center of town. And at that time, that's where we lived. But it was furnished, we had no furniture. We had left everything in the east, so we had to rent a house with furniture. So we had no furniture to move. We moved only our personal belongings, and then my whole class -- we were 9 or 10 -- 10, I think classmates, they all helped. They all knew I was going to leave and they all helped. And one of the classmates, her cousin was a priest with one of the parishes. So the St. Segondia -- that's spelled S-t. for saint. And Segondia, S-e-g-o-n-d-i-a. It's a small, I don't know if you call that a village or town, it was either a village or town near the border. Closer to -- the border was in the village or next to the village, and they told me to go to that priest. So we all got -- but the night before, one of my classmates, Odile Dae Moril. Her first name is Odile, O-d-i-l-e. She was a noble. D-a-e, and Moril, M-o-r-i-l. She came to the house, and she rang our bell. Just at the time of curfew, the Germans had already come by because they came just before curfew. And she told us -- because all the Jews had to be in before the other people, a little earlier. We had to be there at 7:00, around 7:00 and the French were obliged to be in by 8:00, something like that or 9:00. So she came to the house, and she heard that there will be a raffle tonight. A raffle, r-a-f-f-l-e, meant arresting a group of Jews. An the police, the French police very often went to see Vilna they knew well and told them to let the Jews know because they couldn't do it. They said it was the whole -- it was an organized and it was organized in such a way, do you know, Louis (ph) organization. So she came and said that we have to come to her house. If we stay in our house, we will probably be all arrested. And I think until -- they can do such a thing. If we come to your house, you will be shot, how can they do such a thing? Again, here like Mr. Charpentier, she was kind. That was always the weapon



against us. That kindness, and saying, "I cannot leave you here. You have to come. You have to come to my house. If not, you will not be able to leave tomorrow, because you will be all arrested. What are you going to do?" And I said, "But you cannot risk your life for that." And do you know, the house would have been taken? She was alone in the house. Her parents were sleeping somewhere else. She was in school, so she was in that house near -- very close to the school. So I said, "We cannot do that." She stood her ground, and she said, "You have to come." And she wouldn't move, so we finally all went. My father, my mother, my grandmother. My grandfather had died, so my mother lived with us -- my grandmother lived with us. She was at that time 80. So she came, and my two sisters, Helen and Rosie, the two youngest and I and Jackie, the little German boy. So we all went and spent the night with her. And the next day, we left our house, we were going back to her house. And we left and my father and my sister, Helen, she was the next to last -- next to the youngest. Rosie is the youngest. So Helen had had an operation on the knee, so she couldn't ride a bike. So she and my father took a bus to a certain point and then they walked to St. Segondia, the city I talked -- the little village to you about. And we were all going to meet in the church. Rosie, the youngest, and I and Jackie. Rosie and I, we rode our bike, and we took turns to have Jackie on the handlebars. And we rode to St. Segondia, and my mother and my grandmother were coming at -- they were staying at Odile's house. And she was going was going to take them to the bus and put them on a bus and come into the center of the city, of the village, which was very dangerous but we had not choice. They couldn't walk. My grandmother was 80, and she had perhaps 10 days before, two weeks before, an operation, a major surgical operation, surgical intervention in her abdomen, so she couldn't walk. So we first, we drove -- we rode, Rosie and I, we rode our bicycles with Jackie, and we are at the church. And then my father and Helen arrived at the church, and the priest was with him. And his name is Christian De Chaumac. De Chaumac is D-e, he was a noble, too. and C-h - - his last name is C-h-a-u-m-a-c. And he was the priest of the parish of St. Segondia, so he waited for us in the church, and when we arrived he said to me, "You are Jewish? And I don't trust Jews. Who tells me that if you arrested, you are not going to tell the Germans that I helped

you? I will help you regardless, but I don't trust you." And I got so mad and so indignant. I said, "How can you even mention that? We would all be killed before we say a word about you. We would never, never say that." And he said, "Do you remember the story of Judas with Jesus?" And I said, "Yes, but we are Judas, and we have not been -- you can trust us." And I was so -- I felt like going away, but at the same time, you couldn't risk the life of so many people. And I told him, "I am terribly, terribly upset that you believe that." That was so wrong, and I had a long conversation -- discussion with him afterward. So he went and scouted the area to make sure there is no other papauté, and then he came back and said, "It looks okay." So my father and Helen, Rosie and Jackie went, and I stayed in church all day waiting on my mother and grandmother. I was the oldest of the three kids. And in our family, it's always the kids who make the decision, you know. When we were there at that age, not when we were small, but at that age. Mostly in France away from Lorraine, you know, my parents weren't so old, but they didn't speak French well. We were the ones who made all the decisions, and the oldest was always in charge. That was the way. Well, when you are a large family, that's how things go. But anyway, I waited in church in about -- I don't know how long. A little while later, we had a customer from our dry goods store, you know, the store in Poitiers who lived in St. Segondia near the church and she had seen me, so she came in the church. And she knew me very well, she said, "You know, a family was arrested, but we don't." And I said, "But how did they look?" She said, "Nobody saw them, but we know the Germans just found them a little while ago, a whole family." And that was atrocious, you know, because I didn't know what to do. Should I go back to Poitiers and tell my mother and grandmother, or should I let them come and save them? But what about my father and the children? I just didn't know, it was atrocious. I never prayed as fervently as in that church. Never, do you know, in my life. That was -- and the priest came in the church and saw me praying and crying. And that's the Jewish way, okay. I couldn't leave, and the priest came in and he felt very bad when he saw, because he knew, too, that they were, as the boy said to me, that he tried to see the people, to see if they were -- but the Germans wouldn't let him approach them. They wouldn't them near. They were, you know, somewhere

prisoners. And he couldn't see them, so -- and I told him I don't know what to do. And he said, "Save your mother and grandmother first, if you can." So I waited and then he became very human to me. You know, he said, "Why don't you come in the presbyter" -- you know where the priest lives? "Why don't you come in my house where my guardian is?" Do you know, he had a woman, like all priests living in sin. "Why don't you come?" And they wanted to feed me and I said, "Absolutely not. " I could not even believe all that. And then I went in and I helped her to be occupied. And then when the time for the bus to leave, I went back to the center of the -- we were all dressed like peasants, because at that time -- now, you wouldn't recognize a peasant from a city person. But at time, they dressed very differently, so we were all dressed, you know, with scarves on the head and long skirts and flat shoes. You know, like the peasants were. So I went to the bus stop, and my mother and grandmother arrived. And we couldn't make my grandmother walk, so my grandmother, we sat her on the bicycle seat. And I was pushing the handlebars and my mother was holding her, the seat to make sure she doesn't fall off. What I have to say, too, my grandfather was the greatest person on earth. My grandmother was a nice woman, but not at all at the level of my grandfather. And she was not the most generous or the most easy person on earth, but when she heard that we wanted to go and she had to have that operation, she said to us, "I am an old woman. I had my life. You just go because with me, you cannot make it. Just leave me here." And I said, "Absolutely not. Either we all go, or nobody goes. If we go, you go, too." So she didn't -- she did not object to it. She was very happy. And that I have to say during the whole war, when people talked about relatives they had to leave behind, my grandmother always looked at them and said, "Not me. I was taken by my children everywhere they went." You know, she always boasted about it, she was not -- she was not the type to be very generous with people. But anyway, we took my grandmother, put her on the bicycle, and we left and we went back to the church. It was just a street from the church. And it was toward dusk, so the Germans were probably eating dinner, because we didn't see any in the city. And the priest went again and scouted the area of the line. You know, the way to go to the line. Because there was nobody, no guards at the line. It was just a line, you know, an open line.

It was an imaginary line, but everybody knew it was there. So he went and he came back, and he said it's okay. So we put back my grandmother on the bike and we went. And that was an extraordinary story, it's hard to believe it that it really happened. As we walked in the city . . .

Q: Oh, there's only one minute? Let's change the tape before you tell the story.

**End of Tape 2.**

### Tape 3

Q: So when we stopped, you were going to tell me about the experience of crossing the border.

A: Okay. When I met -- when I took my grandmother and my mother -- my grandmother on that bicycle and we had to walk along and it was at dusk. We had to walk along the street. I don't remember if it was a main street or secondary street, but we had to walk along a whole street to go to the ligne de marquer, to the line -- to the border where, you know, none of you had friends, and farmers were all sitting in front of their houses resting at that time. Do you know, around dusk. And when they saw us -- my mother, my grandmother and I -- with that bicycle, they started to pray for us because they understood what was going on. They had seen many people go through, and they prayed for us; they crossed themselves. Some woman kneeled in the dirt, and it was pitiful to see that. And none of them betrayed us, and they were all very poor, very poor farmers. And the Germans were there with them with a lot of money. But none of them betrayed us, they all prayed for us. It was so beautiful, it's unbelievable. You know, when I tell people, they think I tell them a movie. It was absolute reality. It was what happened to us. And my mother, my grandmother couldn't believe it; they saw it, too. And I thanked them, going by I thanked them. And I told them thank you for praying for us. Then we arrived at the -- we walked past the street, and we arrived very fast to the demarcation line. And we crossed it, and then I met my whole family, they were all safe. Another family had been arrested, people we don't know. They were, let me see, the sacrificed lambs, you know, for us. We were saved because the Germans were so busy with them and they let us go. They didn't let us go, they didn't find us. They didn't look for us. Do you know, they were not patrolling actively. They had gotten the details, arrested the whole family. They were satisfied with that. So they were \_\_\_\_\_, and they were very busy doing all that work because Germans are very organized, you know. They have to do all the paperwork, that was very important. All Germans are extremely organized, and that's why we were against such an organization that Jews could not get out and survive unless French people, who were not Jewish, helped. It was impossible to do. Absolutely impossible.

Q: You arranged this whole . . .

A: Yes. Because I told I was the oldest and I felt -- but all my classmates helped me. My fiancé helped me, and I told my mother we are going to go. And she said, "We cannot. How can we go? Look like us, we are going to all be arrested." I said, "We have to try. We have to go." My father agreed right away, but my mother said, "What are we going to do with grandma?" I said, "We take her." She said, "How do you want to take her?" I said, "We take her on my bike." I arranged all that, and it's a funny thing, I never had done anything like that. I never had, you know, been so active in my life. I had never done anything like that. But it's very strange, because when we arrived in the unoccupied France, I sent a telegram to my brother. Another thing I wanted absolutely to go and fast is because our brothers wanted to come back and get us. We knew they had written that they wanted to come and get us out. And that was too dangerous for them to go back and forth, that was even more dangerous. That's twice as dangerous, you know, to do it twice. And that's why I felt we should go. And I wanted Steph to escape, and that was the only way. If we didn't escape, we would all have been arrested. So that was the only way to do it. I wasn't alone, I organized it in my family, but everybody helped me. You know, my friends all helped me and so many of them.

Q: At what point in time was this?

A: That was in August of 1942, because Steph had been in prison in July 10th, and she was in prison most of July. She must have been arrested end of June, I don't remember exactly when. So it has to be in August of '42, but the date I don't remember. I cannot remember those things.

Q: What was going on in France . . .

A: Oh, it was -- the Germans were having trouble in Russia, and as soon as they start to have trouble in Russia, all the edicts became worse every day. And they made more rules and more -- and arrested more people and deported more people, but we all thought that the deportation was strictly for working. Do you know, to send them to working? We never, never had any idea what really the death camps were. We never heard of that. We knew that the Germans had not been very -- how can I say -- sweet to their Germans that they arrested, you know, and put in

concentration camps. But we never could even realize that they would do that to other people. Do you know, it's very strange, it's very -- that we did not realize it. We couldn't figure it out, and how can you figure out that people can be so barbaric with other people? It's impossible to figure out unless yourself have barbaric tendencies. I feel that way, I don't know. But it was a very strange thing, we never knew what was going on. And it's lucky because we survived, but we survived, too, with so much hope. From the first day on, we had so much hope because of de Gaulle. He was our, do you know, like Pétain was a god for these people; de Gaulle was our -- he was hope with a big H. And we believed in him 100 percent, and we really thought that it would be -- that we would survive. And when my mother complained about the condition, we were young and we saw things differently than she did. So we . . .

Q: We got to stop, we got to stop. The light went off.

A: Oh, how did . . .

Q: When we had to stop, you were talking about your mother's reaction, do you remember that?

A: Yes. She was always terrified for her children. And I always told her that we are living history. And she said, "I would like a little less history. I could do without." And she just did more like any mother, she was just concerned about her children. The worst blow came when my sister was arrested, and she -- I remember she said we will never see her anymore. And I said, "Why do you say that? She's just going to go to work." She said, "When they take a young girl like that, they are not going to let her come home." That's how she felt about it. And during the whole war, she always was very nice to us. Never cried or -- you know, but sometimes she would say, "How can I sleep in a bed when I don't know where my kids sleeps? How can I eat when I don't know if she has food?" It was very, very difficult for her. For my father, too. It was very difficult, he felt terrible that he had not been able to get her out of there when he was arrested. He cried, he said, "Steph, but you know that" -- and he tried to make her say certain things to be pleasant to the Germans and she refused. She absolutely refused. And one thing, she was not feeling well because I told you she had a serious problem with her kidney. She was holding at the desk with her hands because he made her stand all the time. And he barked at her,

the SS, "Get your hands off my desk." That was not Hipp, that was another SS that was a higher up officer. "Get off your desk." And when I was in Germany and a German in my office would keep his hands on my desk, I would do the same thing. It was just I couldn't stand it. It would just react the same way, "Get your hands off my desk." Demonstrate, I couldn't accept that.

They always remember that happened to her.

Q: Where did you go to?

A: Okay. That night we slept in that village in a hotel. And the next morning, we waited all day for Stephanie to arrive because we thought she would escape. And she never showed up. So that night we couldn't stay in that little village, it was just a village. So we took the train to Mogilev near Velle, not far from Velle. It's a mining and steel center. And my aunt, the sister of my father, was living there, was retreating there with her family. So we went and stopped there at their house, and Jackie was able to see his father, Josie, you know. Because Josie was with my aunt, and they hadn't seen each other for a long time. And then the next -- I don't know, the next day or two days later, we went to Haifa, to where my brothers were and we stayed with them. And very soon I had to leave because I wanted to continue my studies. So I went first to another university, not Marseilles, but to I think it was Montpellier or \_\_\_\_\_. I cannot remember, but it was Montpellier, because Montpellier is a very well known, very good university. So I went there and I went to the Red Cross because once you are Red Cross, you stay Red Cross. You know, that's the top schools in France for nursing. In Europe at least, in all Europe. So I went to the school in Montpellier and I had an interview with the director of the school. And she was an old, ugly person. I don't mean ugly physically, but the first thing she asked me, "Are you Jewish?" Because I told her that I did one first year in Poitiers and I had to get away from Poitiers. She said, "Why? Are you Jewish?" And I said, "Yes, what difference does it make?" I told her because you have nothing to lose at that time, and I could not accept that French people tell me that. I just couldn't accept that. And she said to me, "I cannot accept any Jewish girl here." And I said, "Do you realize, are you German, or are you French?" And she said, "No, I'm French, but I cannot -- I believe in Hitler and I believe in Lovel," that was his



minister, "and I believe in all that and I cannot accept any Jew." "Okay, are there any rules and regulations that Jews cannot be accepted in school?" There was none. In unoccupied France there was, but not in occupied France. And . . .

Q: You said the opposite.

A: Oh, in occupied France there were, but not in unoccupied France. I'm sorry. So I said to her, I was really very upset and I left because she was -- and in leaving I told her, "When the war is over and de Gaulle enters France, I will come back and visit you." But I never did. How can you try to punish people years later? Do you know it's impossible to do. You have said that and you will never forget, but you don't go back all the way to \_\_\_\_\_ to Montpellier, to punish that person. So I never did, but I was terribly upset. So I went back and I tried my luck in Marseilles, and how I went, why I went to the Red Cross Headquarters in Marseilles first, I never know. I can't remember. There must have been a reason. Probably somebody told me to go to see Mrs. Keller, K-e-l-l-e-r, who was a marvelous person. She was Alsatian, I don't remember, I think from Strasbourg but I'm not sure. Her daughter had been a nurse and died. She contracted an infection as a nurse and she died. And her mother became a nurse because of that. But she became the Regional Director of the Red Cross in Marseilles. She was a very educated woman and a very nice woman. And I met her, I am sure somebody must have recommended her. Told me to go to see her. And I told her my problem. I told her I did one year in Poitiers at the Red Cross School. I want to continue my schooling, but I'm Jewish. I told her right out. And she looked at me and said, "What does that mean? Who cares what you are? You wanted to become a nurse, you will become a nurse." And she said, "I am going to make sure of that." And she called the Red Cross School in Pithiviers on the telephone, and she talked to the director of the school who is Chabannes, C-h-a-b-a-n-n-e-s. And she told her that she wants me admitted without a problem. And he told her that I Jewish, and I went to Red Cross -- she told me go right away. She told me how to go there because I didn't know much of Marseilles, you know, about buses and I went there. And when I arrived, I had very special reception because what I learned much later is that the brother of the -- not Vice -- I don't know you call that. But she was not the

director, she was Assistant Directress. Her brother was the chief of the Militia, of the French Militia. And I didn't know that, but when I arrived these two women, Ms. Lovel and Ms. Chabannes were there. I don't know if it's Lovell or Lovel, something like that. I don't remember her name exactly. They were both there and their reception like an iceberg. "We cannot accept you. No Jew can come in that school. No way can we accept you." And I said, "But Mrs. Keller said that I would be accepted." "No way can you be accepted." I wanted desperately to finish my studies, and they said to me, "You never return to Ms. Keller. We forbid you to return to see Ms. Keller. Just stay away from her." And I said to her, "How can you forbid me? You don't accept me in the school, and you forbid me to go to see Mrs. Keller?" And I went straight back to Mrs. Keller and I told her what had happened. Oh, she was completely -- she took the phone and called them that they were going to be fired on the spot. That she's going to send me back and she wants to hear that within an hour I am accepted in that school. And they had to accept me, but life was atrocious for the first few months. Because they treated me terribly, you know, I was there against their will and they hated Jews. But that was pure malice, that was the worst French people you could meet at that time. And the brother was a doctor and he was teaching at that school, so he had a lot of clout. And his sister was Assistant Director, so you know -- so anyway, for several months nobody -- I mean the administration, the students were okay, you see. But the administration, nobody would respond to my greetings. I had to greet them, I had to be polite, but I was never obsequious. You know, I never tried to enter into their good grace. I just did my work, I was polite, but I stayed away from them. But they were horrible with me. I tell you they would not even talk to me or answer my greetings, nothing. And then after several months, slowly they changed. We had our own clinic at the small private hospital for the Red Cross, for that school. And the director slept in that building, and every night she would go around and talk to the patients about the students and ask them their evaluations of the students. And my evaluations were such -- the patients loved me because they said I was always smiling. You know, I never told them who I was, what problems I had, nothing. But I was doing my duty, and I was always pleasant and I was always taking well care

of them. And then slowly they accepted me, and it was a slow process. But finally they were even very nice to me after, you know, but the beginning was -- I never thought I could finish but I did. I finished school in these conditions, but when I finished school, they were already completely different to me than in the beginning. So that was quite an experience.

Q: Was there relationship between -- I was asking if there was any kind of official relationship between the Red Cross and Vichy.

A: I cannot tell you official. That would mean there was a written statement. I don't know. But, for sure, the Vichy as the Red Cross was extreme right in general. And not only the right, they were for Pétain and Vichy 100 percent, and they never helped the Jews in the camps. Never did anything in the camps to help them, and they -- I mean the camps in France. My uncle who had been in Drancy and my mother made him escape and then he was arrested, he was not the type of person who stayed out of trouble during the war. Because he was not at all the type of person who looked for trouble. But he was the real scholar, you know, and the real doctor, and he did not know how to save himself. So he was again arrested in Marseilles, and I went every day to see him in the camp which was outside of Marseilles and brought him food and clothing, cleaned his laundry and all that. And that's where I saw a departure, that's the only time I saw a departure of deportees. He was put on that train, and somebody from the Jewish organization who knew him very well got him out. He said, "That man doesn't belong there." But he -- and then later he was saved by one of my uncles who got him out in a car from a camp. And that uncle was deported and never came back. You know, that's how things were, but Max, who was a marvelous person, and he survived the war because we made him go to Switzerland.

Q: But the Red Cross, you saying . . .

A: Yeah. But the Red Cross, they never helped, so in that camp, I saw deportation and I saw thought the Red Cross was absolutely not doing anything in the camp. They were there because they were supposed to be there, but they didn't help anybody. They didn't take care of patients. And I saw the Germans and the French Prefect and Super Prefect, which is the highest -- you know, like your government, in the camp making sure that everything was according. And I saw

people, Germans and French people -- mostly Germans, taking the babies out of the arms of the nurses and pushing the mothers in the wagons. I saw all that. I didn't see the wagons, but I saw them pushing them toward the railroad which was behind. So I couldn't see the wagons, but I saw how they were pushed to all that. And I was in that little place, do you know, an office, a little office. They made us go in there because they didn't want us to see, but there was a window. And I was there with a French policeman, and he started crying, sobbing, and saying, "I am a policeman, but I don't want to be involved in such things. Look what they're doing, it's atrocious what they're doing." And I was absolutely -- I never knew that such things could happen. But I saw it with my own eyes. That was near Marseilles, I don't remember the name of the camp. Very close to Marseilles, I cannot remember. And that was in '42. In late '42. You know, about -- no, late summer of '42. Perhaps September, October, I cannot tell you exactly. And it was -- but I come back to the Red Cross. When I was in Paris at the end of the war, just before the liberation went on, the resistance started fighting in the streets of Paris. And they formed groups of nurses and doctors with the white flag running and pick up, you know, our wounded and take them to the hospital. That's all Cross organized. When I went to a G-stop, the first thing they asked me, "Are you Jewish?" And I almost killed them, I was so horrified. I said, "Our lives are at the front of Paris and you still ask that question? I am a Red Cross and I'm ashamed to be Red Cross nurse." It was horrible. Do you know, that was the Red Cross? I absolutely feel that the Red Cross in France, I cannot tell everywhere else, but the Red Cross in France had a very bad role during the war. And I will say that until the end of my life. And I'm a Red Cross, you know, I am part of the Red Cross.

Q: What was the political climate like in Marseilles compared to Poitiers?

A: It's an enormous city. It's an enormous port. You don't know as many people, but in Marseilles like in Poitiers, I found people who helped me. And I found other who didn't, you know. You always had both sides, but I had more people helping me than people not helping me or doing wrong things to me. Much more.

Q: Was there a difference, though, in the whole mood?

A: Oh, yeah. Because it was not occupied the same way. The Germans were not in charge of everything. The French government was still in charge; in Poitiers, no, it was the Germans. For example, in the office where I worked for Germans, we order to get out and greeting -- do you know it was a complete different way of living.

Q: More freedom than the south?

A: Oh, yeah. There was no comparison. We didn't -- nobody wore a yellow star. I told you that before. Nobody, nobody ever wore the yellow star. That doesn't mean that Jews were not arrested. That's another thing. They were arrested, but it was in a complete different way. Completely different.

Q: I was asking you a bit about Marseilles. I know that at some point the Nazis had occupied Southern France, and I was wondering how that changed things. And do you remember when that was?

A: Oh, yeah. That was in, I think, November '42. Yeah, I think several months after we made that -- so it changed because you had the presence of the Germans. But in Marseilles there were more Italians than Germans. There were Germans, too, but there were more Italians. The whole de la \_\_\_\_\_, do you know, the \_\_\_\_\_, all that was more occupied by the Italians. And they were not at all like the Germans. You didn't trust them, but they were not as, you know, the barbaric as the Germans. They probably did very wrong things, but I never had any run-in with them so I cannot judge. But there certainly people who suffered from these type of things, but I didn't. So it's difficult for me to judge. But there were Germans all over, and they started to deport first foreigners and then they started to round up the French. Do you know, it was just an excuse, the foreigners. That was just to make the French feel good, that they are not going to take their own citizens. But that didn't last very long. And the worse the situation became in Russia, and worse the situation became for us. And that's what we all told my mother when she complained they were doing terrible things. We said, "Don't you realize they are losing the war?" Much before they lost the war. They are losing; if not, they wouldn't be so barbaric and so nasty, because they know that they are losing the war.

Q: What was it like to live in this environment?

A: You had to survive. It's difficult to tell you exactly. It was very lonely for me in Marseilles all alone. I had a cousin and his wife there and their little girl, and I saw them once a day. I had one meal a day with them. My brother sent, you know, was in the mountains, and he sent packages, Care packages, to them to feed me, too. So, you know, for everybody because Marseilles, the food was very, very low. It's a very poor area of agriculture, so if you didn't have things grown in that area, then you had much less to eat. You had tomatoes and melons and seasoning and things like that, but you had nothing else. The Germans took all the food to Germany to feed their people. And we had things like sweet potatoes and rutabagas; you wouldn't make me eat these things. Since the war, I never eat them. I cannot even -- when I see it in the store, I walk away. I never buy it, you know. These are the things we eat. We had no different very much potatoes, very seldom. That was a luxury. And people were starving in the street. You would see people -- mostly the people who had no connections and no money, they had not enough. They were not sufficient to feed you, and you would see them collapse in the streets of hunger. Mostly in Marseilles in that region. Now, where my father's family was in the mountains, there was much more food. Because they had cheeses, they had chicken, they had -- you know, there were lots of farmers. It was a different area. So my brother sent me things. My brother was always taking care of me, my brother. And I told you that after \_\_\_\_\_, he moved the whole family to the Cottian, which is in the mountains. The massif \_\_\_\_\_, which is the central mountains in France, west of Lyon and a little more north. West, north of Lyon. And [Souise], too, but it's west of Lyon about. And he went to a resort which is called Vic-sur-cere, V-i-c, hyphen, s-u-r, hyphen, c-e-r-e. And it was a beautiful little resort in the high mountains, and there only two roads leading to the Vic-sur-cere. So my brother organized Jewish patrols night and day, and as soon the Germans were announced, then every Jewish family had a place to go. Do you know, up the mountains. And many, many Jews were saved due to that. And my brother tried -- he became the chief of the resistance in Cottian of the whole area. And I have a book of one of his nephews, of the nephew of my sister-in-law who wrote a little paragraph like

that about him. Saying not only did he save his extended family and took care of everything, but he had such a very active role in the resistance. You know, I have that book here somewhere. But he was amazing. And my brother, Arnold, the second brother, was as active as Fred. But he is not the guy who wants to be a leader. He's a leader, he does things. But he doesn't want any recognition for it; you know, he's that type. And he -- but after the war, when the war was ended -- oh, but I go too fast. They stayed in the Cottian, and then when things went really bad -- I don't know if it was the end of '43, beginning of '44, I don't remember when -- my brothers moved my whole family up even higher up in the mountains in Narniac, N-a-r-n-i-a-c. But during that time -- and then he was still the chief of resistance. And during that time my sister, Helen, who was in the university at Clermont-Ferrand, which is to Nièvre, but it's still more west than Vic-sur-cère, I think it's northwest, but it's west of Vic-sur-cère. She became -- she was in the university, and she became extremely active. She had the printing machine in her home. She lived two floors above the Gestapo. Two floors. But she had the printed machine in her room where she printed, you know, all the posters and all the things for propaganda. And she traveled from city -- she was a very pretty girl, I will show you a picture. She traveled with her rucksack full of ammunition from one city to the other to bring to the resistance. And she was never caught. Like one time she went out of the station with her rucksack full of it, and a French policeman said, "Hey, young girl, show me what you have in your rucksack." And she gave him a huge smile -- she was dying, but she gave him a huge smile, and he said, "A girl with such a pretty smile cannot do anything wrong. Just go." And, you know, things like that, and she was in the university in Clermont-Ferrand in the library when the Germans, the SS or Gestapo -- I think it was the Gestapo walked in. And the professor who was in the library at that time objected to the Germans to enter the university ground, you know, library, which is sacred for university. Sacred territory. So the Germans just killed him in front of the students. They just shot him. They were very nice, they were very sweet. And my sister was arrested and taken to the Gestapo, and all the Jewish kids were arrested. But she had the card for the Jews then, but all kids were arrested. And the next day she was released because they didn't think she was Jewish.

And also she was very lucky, but she was extremely active during the whole war. And then after that, she went to a school to become an officer of the Air Force, French Air Force. But she couldn't finish because she had an accident, and she almost lost a leg. She had an accident with a bicycle in Paris. But that was nothing to do with the war. And she married a French Jew, Jon Claude Bellisianni (ph), who had was decorated with the highest decoration of the resistance by de Gaulle. So she married the right guy, and they are still married.

Q: Let's go back to you in Marseilles. Another question I had is how much information did you have or communication did you have with the outside world? How did you get information about what de Gaulle was doing and the resistance and all that?

A: Everybody was listening to BBC in hiding. And do you know if you had no radio, then somebody else told you what they heard. It was just, we knew -- and then we had some reporters, French reporters on the radio, who always said the English didn't do this and this and that. But we knew they had done it, so we knew what was going on. Even the last few days in Paris, that reporter -- I cannot remember his name -- he was very well known. He was standing -- and he didn't mean to do that to help us. He was really on the other side, but he was always denying -- he was always denying that things were wrong for that. And then we knew that he was denying, it was the truth, and we always celebrated, you know. But we knew, we listened to the BBC and we communicated with people. And the newspapers gave us very little information, but it was mostly people who gave it. So the most important thing was the BBC.

Q: What was your daily life like in Marseilles? Were you studying? Were you practicing nursing, as well?

A: No, I was not a nurse yet; I was a student. But I was in the hospitals, yes. The university hospitals were -- how do you call it? \_\_\_\_\_ in French, do you know what that means? You go through medicine, surgery -- we called it [starge]. I don't remember how you call that in English, but I went through all this teaching and we had classes every day. Every day.

Q: Well, why didn't you decide to pass as a Catholic?



A: I couldn't do that. I never said that I was Jewish to people around me normally. To the directors of the school, but I normally didn't tell people I was Jewish. Certain people, I did. You know, I really believed that I had trust for people, I told. And I very seldom made -- but I am lucky, too. I am very lucky. That's why I am alive. But I -- I forgot.

Q: I'm just asking you, you never chose to lie about it.

A: No. I never said I was Catholic, never, never. That is something I just couldn't do. When I was in the Army, I never felt I was Jewish, but I would never go to church with them and never told them -- I said, "I don't believe in that." I never went. I cannot do that. If I went to a funeral, I wouldn't mind -- I don't mind going into a church. That doesn't bother me at all. But if I go into a church, I don't kneel and I cannot cross myself. I cannot do that. It's just impossible. Do you know, when you learn as a child the Bible, the people were ostracized because of their faith and they didn't bow in front of kings, things like that. This impresses you as a kid. And then later, you cannot do that. I feel that way.

Q: Were you able to continue celebrating holidays or . . .

A: Yeah. They didn't eat meat most of the time because there was no kosher meat. But for holidays, they had the Shavuot and they had to travel to Aarau, to the capitol to go to the shop and come back, but they always did. One time my father decided he couldn't stand it anymore, he wants meat. Because my brothers and my sister-in-law and my youngest sister say -- and my mother let them and my father didn't. So one time my father said he eats meat and then he was sick for 24 hours because he had eaten unkosher meat. And he was not as religious as my mother, but still that was against all his beliefs. He couldn't do it.

Q: How long did you stay in Marseilles?

A: A year and half, about. In '43, I think in October or November '43, I left Marseilles and I went back to Paris. My sister, my oldest sister, lived in Paris. That was after I graduated. It must have been in November -- in October '43 -- oh, yes, in October '43, the day -- I don't remember now if it was the day of my examination or the day before, I read the newspaper. And I knew that my fiancé had been arrested. I knew that, and that he was condemned by the French

Tribunal to life in prison for resistance. But then I didn't know anything else, and that morning I read the paper like I always read the paper. And I saw that four of the five of these young people had been shot. It was written in the paper, and that was in October of '43. I think it was the 6th of October they were shot, so I must have read it the 7th, the 8th. And I had my examination on that day or the next day, I cannot remember. But anyway, I read that, but I didn't know which one of the five had been saved. I never knew until after the war. After Lincoln. No, I knew it -- I got in touch with girls in Poitiers. Do you know with classmates? And they let me know if yes or no, and I heard that Jack was killed and his brother. He had two brothers, the two only kids of that family were shot together. These two others in Paris in Moldavia. That's the place in Paris on a little hill where the Germans shot the French people, resistance people. And I didn't know if I should take my exam or not, but my brother had put so much money, you know, and so much effort to keep me in school that I felt I should. So I finished, I got it. And then after that, I went back to Paris to be with my sister. Because I had nothing to do in the mountains. I couldn't walk, I couldn't find any work. In Paris I knew I could find work, and I worked in Paris.

Q: Did you get involved in any kind of resistance activities in Marseilles?

A: In Marseilles? No, not really, no. I didn't have the opportunities. I remember my brother came to see me one day, and we met in the streets a lawyer from Metz, a classmate of my brother, who I knew. And he had been in the Army, and he and my brother talked about resistance. That was very much the beginning, before my brother moved to the Cottian, to the mountains when he was still young. But I told them that I want to join, too, and they looked at me and that lawyer said to me, "Little girls cannot do it. See, we don't want little girls to risk their lives," you know. And I reproached him, and after the war when I met him, I said, "I could never forgive you for having said that." I was so mad at him, and I had no opportunity in Marseilles to really join anything.

Q: You went to Paris. Was it easy to get back and forth, to go where you wanted to go?

A: No, no. It was not. There were controls in the train, and the German came and controlled my papers. But I was lucky and they didn't think I was Jewish until after I go. They didn't question me. I was always very lucky.

Q: Were you afraid?

A: I don't even remember. I don't remember that, how I dared to do that. I was probably afraid, how can you not? You know, for a few moments until they leave you, you don't know what's going to happen to you. I sure I was afraid. But I arrived in Paris and I joined my sister and lived with her. And she lived in an apartment rented by non-Jews. That was the only way we could do it. And we had to move several times. Because when somebody got arrested and they had our address, we had to move to make sure that they, you know, they were tortured, you don't know what people can talk. And you cannot trust anybody, not because you don't trust them, but I don't know if I would talk under torture. Nobody can know, nobody can judge that. Because you don't know how you would react to that unless you have gone through that. And even if you got through that, one day you may not talk and another day you may talk. Do you know, you can be a hero one time and be the worst coward another time. That same person, that doesn't mean that -- you cannot be always hero when you have no brain; you don't think. And you have no reflexes, you just -- you are just muscles. That's how I feel about it.

Q: Just tell me a little bit about what you did in Paris, the political environment, just what was it like being there?

A: Okay.

Q: Now, this is the beginning of 1944?

A: No, end of '43. Until the liberation of Paris. First, I started to work for an agency, because I couldn't work in a hospital. That was too dangerous. They would have inquired about many things. But I worked for a private agency who placed me in families. And I was the luckiest person. I got to know marvelous people, and they were -- the people I worked for usually were on my side. They didn't know I was Jewish, I didn't tell them. I couldn't tell them, they were -- it was too risky for them to know. If they were arrested, they could absolutely say they didn't

know. But if I tell them, they have no chance. It's not right, it wasn't right. But I worked for them, and they knew I was on, you know, on the same side. Their son became very involved in the resistance, and he joined the Second Army -- do you know -- no, that's French words. Do you know for army it's difficult for me to find the words in English. So bandes of the Division of Bandes of La Claire, he joined. My second cousin joined them, too, and he went to Berlin; he was in Berlin for a year and a half or two. And Fred went into a school for officers, because he had been just an enlisted man in the Army. He was only drafted, he was never, you know, an Army person.

Q: When you were working for this family, what kind of work were you doing? Were you doing nursing?

A: Yeah. Private nursing for the old lady -- the old brother of the woman. And she was a marvelous person. Her name was Mrs. Lucca (ph). I cannot remember the name of the mother, but her son and the brother of Madam Lucca was the Curator of the Louvre, you see. And they were cousins of French poets, it was a marvelous family. And I had a marvelous time with them, and they were very helpful. They even when they knew that we were in danger because somebody had been arrested that we knew, they gave us an apartment to stay there. We were extremely lucky. We became very friendly with them.

Q: Did you go to church?

A: No, I couldn't. There was no reason.

Q: What was going on in Paris? Were there a lot of roundups? Were there deportations?

A: Yes. And we lived as normally as possible. My sister and I, we went to the theater, we saw Octagon. We saw Octagon which was a terrific play at that time, because if you know Octagon, do you know Octagon? It's play now, but the play of Octagon is a team of the Berlin prison, and her uncle is going to have her killed. And the guards talk about her and her life and her killing like she wouldn't exist. And it was exactly what the order tried to do to show what the Germans were doing. And there were Germans in the room, in the hall. They were there and they applauded, and they didn't even think of what really the meaning was. And the French were

wild, you know, they applauded these scenes absolutely. I remember that one night I saw that -- and others, we went to movies. We went to things, but we had -- I was always extremely lucky, because many times, I don't say once or twice. I cannot remember how many times, but let's say several times, I went to the station, a subway station, ready to go downstairs and then walk away. And I never knew why, and then suddenly I heard the whistles and Germans were arresting people. So I was never caught in such a thing. I always walked away from it. Do you know that's -- I was very lucky. There's is no other explanation, because I didn't do it because they said it's dangerous. I just stopped and walked away. And I have a sixth sense of danger, I don't know how I got it, but I have a sixth sense. Because that happened to me, that's why I'm alive. Because in Germany, too, that happened. Do you know, that I suddenly sensed that I couldn't go any further, that I had to stop. So . . .

Q: Was it wartime conditions there? I mean was there enough to eat? Were there . . .

A: We had enough to eat, but many people starved in Paris, too. People who had no money were starving.

Q: Was it easier to get by in a big city like Paris as a Jew?

A: Yes. If you had friends who rented an apartment, yes. But if you had no friends doing these things, then it was as difficult as anywhere else. Or worse, because that was in occupied France. But it depended who you knew and who helped you, and I told you that before. That no French person would have survived the marvelous, if you can call it marvelous, but extremely effective organizations of the Germans if they were not helped. It was impossible. And Jews could not help you, they were in the same situation as you were. It was the non-Jews who could help you. But everything they did for us was always, always at the risk of their life. And that's what so beautiful about it, that they didn't hesitate. And, for example, the family who rented the first apartment for my sister and several apartments, and then that other lady give her her apartment. But every time they rented an apartment, the mother and father knew about it and the sons knew about it. There were two sons. The father was a lawyer. The mother was a very educated

person. The two sons, one was a doctor; the other was a lawyer. They were -- do you know, but they did not hesitate to do these things.

Q: Let's change the tape.

**End of Tape 3.**

#### Tape 4

A: Oh, no. Do you know, I helped, whoever needed little help, the Jews or non-Jews . . .

Q: All right. Hold on. Were you involved in any kind of resistance efforts while in Paris?

A: Not any structured resistance at all, but I felt always that just by surviving that was resisting. By not dying, others thought that was already resistance, and that was a victory. Any Jew who could survive or any French person who could survive was resisting the Germans. And by being hidden, hidden in a way because we did not rent an apartment in our name of things like that, but we still normally. We went out in the streets, we did things. So we felt resisting.

Q: This may be a strange question, but as you recount your experiences to me, you're doing this in a very lively way. And you're telling me that you were able to go to a theater and that you tried to maintain a somewhat normal life. But my sense is it really wasn't, couldn't have been that cheerful.

A: No, it was terrifying because you always had very much -- you worried terribly about your family. You know, I didn't know what was going on in the Cottian, we had no relationship. We had no communications between Paris and the Cottian where my parents were. So it was very difficult to know what they were doing, and it was -- we worried enormously. If you want to survive, you have to live, and to live, you have to live as close to normal as possible. But that doesn't mean we went to the theater all the time or to the movies. Only when it was something unusual, like Octagon, or there was a movie, I remember, about scaling mountains. That was another symbol of resistance to the Germans, so every French person knew that that movie was made for that purpose. So we all went to see that movie. You see, these are the things which were very important. And we had books which in a very subtle way showed that we were resisting, do you know? These were complete different environment and a complete way of life in that way. We were always looking for what the meaning of our survival means. Do you know, what we can do to survive and what meaning it has. But if you lose your whole family, then there is not much meaning to it. It was hard enough for us to lose my sister. We lost an

awful lot of uncles and aunts and cousins, an awful lot. I don't know if I count them, there's at least 25 or 30 or more. I never counted them really. So . . .

Q: So what else can you tell me about Paris up until liberation?

A: We just survived, that's all. Do you know, it's difficult to remember events, different events, but it was a constant -- we moved there and took up refuge in other people's homes when we felt that we were trapped by something.

Q: And the Germans were everywhere?

A: Oh, everywhere. Everywhere you went, they had the best of guns. You know, they had the best of guns. They had all the best mansions in Paris. They were everywhere. Wherever you went, they were there. And they went out a lot, they went to theaters everywhere. They had the money, they had the means. That's . . .

Q: Were there ever situations where these German flirting with you or . . .

A: Oh, they tried. They tried always to, you know, to stop the girls and talk to them. But all armies do, but we didn't respond; we walked away. But when they saw that we didn't respond, you know, they didn't dare do anything. They still maintained a behavior which was different from the Eastern countries. In France, they always had to behave differently. That doesn't mean that they were not barbaric and caused terrible things and did terrible things, but their behavior in general had to be okay. Because we were in a Western country, and they had orders. And you know Germans obey orders, they are very good at that.

Q: Describe for me liberation, please.

A: Oh, that was different. We knew the Army was arriving, and we knew that Paris -- we heard that Paris was going to be destroyed by the Germans, but they never destroyed it. And the last night they were, or the last day, during the whole day there were posts with machine guns at almost every intersection with a group of soldiers waiting for the Army. But we didn't see any more tanks in Paris, but we saw were these little machine guns, they could do enough damage. But the resistance had already started for several days to fight against them. And there battles in the street, and that's why I told you I tried to go to the Red Cross, they wanted to be partners; it



was their duty. They simply wouldn't accept it. So -- but the resistance had wounded them, too, Germans. But they were very active all of the time. But then, suddenly that was when the French Second Division of La Claire entered Paris first. The Americans gave them that marvelous courtesy to enter Paris first, and we knew that. We heard that on the radio. That guy who I told you, that reporter, announced that now -- or was he hearing from somebody else? I don't remember. But the reporter announced that the Army is entering Paris, one of the doors, I don't remember if it was [Borneo] one of the doors of Paris. And then all the windows opened in the whole neighborhood, and I know in every neighborhood in France, and everybody started to sing the Marseillaise. And the Germans posts were still down there, and they looked up to us but they didn't shoot. And then the Army came in and they disappeared, the Germans disappeared. They knew that -- what could they do against tanks? There was a whole division of tanks coming in. And then at 12 o'clock De Gaulle went to the capitol, Notre Dame, and had a big mass of celebration. But -- and the next day, I took my bike, I rode all over Paris, and they were shooting everywhere because there were snipers on the roofs. And they were shooting all over. And I didn't find that that was dangerous. You know, I just rode around, I was living really history then. You know, that was my life. And I was so excited about it, and then the next day -- do you know that was the next day when the Army entered Paris. And that's how we were liberated, but there were still snipers for two, three days. And then suddenly, you know, it slowly -- they were arrested, beaten, shot. I wasn't involved.

Q: German snipers?

A: Yeah. Or French, do you know, the French who were against -- who were for Pétain. There were some, there were some of them, called the collaborators. You know, they ones that collaborated with the Germans had everything to lose. So that's how it happened. That was quite an event, you know, of periods, this Army coming in. But we didn't know what had happened to my family. But a while, perhaps a week or two, I don't remember, but it took so long to -- because the Army was coming from Normandy going east from Normandy and from Britannia, from Britain. But then another Army came up from the south, from [France], and

went up north. So they were completely different fields of battle, and the Cottian was completely in a different zone. We couldn't have any communications for quite a while until they were liberated, too. But luckily, they all survived, but had horrendous adventure. My sister, Rosie, was caught -- the youngest, she was caught in a forrest at night. She had that day, there was a resistant who had been shot in the village of Narniac, and they had nobody to take care of him. So she went to another village to find the priest because he had some nursing experience. To ask him to come and the priest refused to come. And she was coming back from that priest -- I met that priest later when I came on -- but I didn't tell you what it was. But, you know, I wasn't there and I couldn't do that. But anyway, she came back in that forrest late at night, and she was suddenly arrested by a group of Germans in the forrest. And the officer said, "She's just a little girl," and his aide or somebody else -- but she understood what they were saying, but she made believe that she didn't understand, she didn't tell them she spoke German. And then the aide said, "Why, don't you see that she's dressed like the resistance?" You know, she was in shorts and a shirt like the kids in the resistance were dressed. And he said, "Oh, come on. She's just a kid." And he refused to do anything, so they let her go.

Q: Let's get back to you in Paris. Now, I know that talking about your family would be really interesting because they all had . . .

A: They did an awful lot . . .

Q: . . . very important experiences, that for today, let's continue with you in Paris. What you did after the liberation. You found out that your family was all alive?

A: Yes, at a later date. And then, I decided to join the Army. I didn't tell my mother. And I tried, and it was extremely difficult to join the Army because they were afraid to begin bad elements. You know, who wanted to hide in the Army that passed. So you had to have all kinds of certificates and recommendations and I finally was able to join the unit of former resistance. And the chief of that -- the chief of that unit was Colonel Fabian, who was very well-known as resistance. And his name is F-a-b-i-a-n. And Colonel Fabian was a Communist, and his group was a Communist group, but I didn't know that. When I arrived, I was very broken because my

reception was very bad. Because the guy who started to question me, he asked me what I done in the resistance, and I told him I did certain things, but personally I would never restructure group of resistance. And he just bawled me out, and I was supposed to -- as a nurse, I came as a nurse. I was sent as a nurse. Then he said to me, "You are not going to be a nurse, you are going to be a social service person, social service." And I never had done that in my life, and then he refused to give me my grade. You know, normally as a nurse, you're an officer. He said, "You will be a soldier, because you didn't do anything during the war." And I told him, "Do you know my fiancé?" He was very well-known there, even books written for his story and his brother. Because they did very many things, they even attacked a train, you know, sabotaged the train of \_\_\_\_\_, the German \_\_\_\_\_. And they killed many Germans by that sabotage, so they were very well-know. And I said, "But he was my fiancé, and I lost him. Don't you think that's already something?" He said, "He died, but you survived and you didn't do anything." He was absolutely atrocious, so he treated me terribly. And then he told me I was a sergeant, and I told him but as a nurse, I'm supposed to be a nurse. And he said, "Not here. For us, you're just a sergeant." He was another Communist, how can I say? Real strong Communist. So he said, "Did you ever join the Communist group?" I said, "No, I'm not a Communist. Why would I join the Communist group?" And he said, "But we were the only resistance." I said, "No, you were not. There were other people resisted, too." And we had a big fight. Anyway, I became a sergeant, and I did my work as a social -- in the social service and took care of the kids. I went to the front, you know, which wasn't very far. There was a river, we were on one side of the river. The Germans were on the other side of the river. A little bit, but not a lot, you know, in Alsace. And I went every day to the front, asked them what they wanted, you know. They were very happy because nobody else was doing that. So one day, I was there very little time, and I felt very much as an outsider. But I didn't complain, I was in the Army; I didn't complain.

Q: Why did you want to join the Army? What motivated you?

A: Why?

Q: Um-hum (yes).

A: To combattre, to fight back. They had done so many bad things, you had to do something about it and defend your country. My country helped me so much, why wouldn't I help my country? I am not a perhaps a candidate, but it just happened that way. But it's true, you know, I was helped by so many people, and we were still fighting, why would I, as a girl, not do it? I had no reason, and as a nurse, I had a real good reason to go there and help people. I never thought of doing anything else. Anyway, I went -- I was walking the street one morning, late morning, and that Colonel Fabian saw me near the headquarters near his office. And he called me, he never had talked to me. Didn't know me, didn't know who I was. And he said to me, "Would you mind manning my telephone?" We were moving to another --probably it was during the Bulge, you know? The Battle of the Bulge. And he had to go back because we couldn't go forward -- we couldn't advance because of the Battle of the Bulge. We were all stopped there. And he said to me -- I think it was at that time, I'm not sure. But anyway, we were moving somewhere else. And he said, "Can you man the office during the time I take lunch?" I said, "Sure." And he said to me, "I'm sorry, but we have nothing to read for you. There are only German books." And I told him, "Oh, I have German fluency." He said, "Do you speak German?" I said, "Yes, I speak German fluently." And he looked at me and he said, "Would you be able to do intelligence work? We desperately need people to do intelligence work." And I never was able to resist a challenge, so I said, "Sure." After that I wondered what was wrong with me, to have accepted, but then I said, "Yes." And seven days later, I was transferred. Somebody picked me up in a Jeep, and I was transferred to the intelligence. And I was trained, you know, to go into mission and then they tried to get me through the Germans' lines 14 times. But . . .

Q: What kind of training did they give you?

A: How to recognize units. When you look at them, talk to them, you know, from where they come. From what area. You know, you had to learn all that, and to recognize equipment. German equipment. How to ask questions. And they let me choose on my own what story I wanted to use to give as a reason for being in Germany if I'm questioned. And that was a good

idea, because if somebody imposes a story on you, you may not keep it right. And I felt that the best way was to say that I'm in love with a German's son here and that I was looking for him. He had disappeared and I was looking all over for him. The Germans are so sentimental for these type of things, that is -- and it worked very well. It helped me tremendously. And at the same time, I was a very young girl, I knew it would protect me because I had a fiancé I loved so much. So I wouldn't have to worry about it, you know. So I felt that was the right story, and I proposed that to them. I had to tell them what I wanted to do. And they thought that was an excellent story, so they found a German. They took him, put him in a reservation, and I had the picture and I had letters from him, one or two; I don't remember. And all that and they made sure that he was kept in isolation until I came back because that I don't meet him somewhere and I shouldn't. So that's how things worked out. Then I was trained in all these type of things. Do you have any more questions about that?

Q: Yeah. Well, who was the leader of your unit, and what was the spirit of your . . .

A: The leader of the real unit was a captain who I couldn't spell. He was Alsatian and I had a lot of trouble later with him. He was \_\_\_\_\_, but he was not located in the same city as we were. I was at that time in Mulhouse, and he was in St. Denis, which is south near the Swiss border. And I had very little contact with him, I knew him very little. But later when I got to live in the same place as he did, then we got into lots of trouble with him. I got in a lot of trouble with him. But not because of anything sexual, but because we did not agree. But that is for later, but anyway, then I . . .

Q: Were there other Jewish people in your . . .

A: Not that I know, no.

Q: But you were treated equally?

A: Oh, yeah. They didn't know I was Jewish. I never told them. If I had told them I am Jewish, they would never have trusted me with that type of work. This was not something you tell people in the French Army at that time. Now they are all for Israel, and they are very for Jewish, but not at that time. Most of them, not all of them, but most of them came from North Africa.

Do you know, with the American Army? They were in North Africa and were from there, they had fought in Corsica, in Italy, and then they went to France. Most of them, not all. And they came with the American Army and they came from the south, from North Africa. So that's one thing I wouldn't have told them. I never discussed that, they never asked me because nobody ever thought -- and I had not given the name Hoffnung, they didn't even know my name. Only very few people knew my name, the big chiefs, but nobody else knew my real name.

Q: What was your name on your identity card?

A: Of what? Of French identity card?

Q: Yes.

A: I had no identity card.

Q: Well, I thought that you had gotten false papers.

A: Oh, yeah. But that was Hoffnung, that was always my real name. And that I was born in Lorraine. I always kept that, but when I was in the Army in intelligence, when I was with the Fabian, unit, then I was under Hoffnung. But as soon I joined the intelligence, they made me change names, and I chose the name of Lelotra because during the war, that's the name I used for my fiancé to write to me. Because he could not from Poitiers write to me in my name, so I had shortened -- and that name I continued keeping in the Army. And everybody knew me under the name of Lelotra, which is L-e-l-o-t-r-a which is a very French name. It's the name of the man who designed the gardens for Louis XIV, Lelotra. So I liked that name.

Q: What was it like serving as a woman? Was it different than serving as a man?

A: Yeah. It was different in a way. You -- but they didn't give me any trouble about being a woman. But it was different, I was not in the infantry. I was in the intelligence, but the people in the intelligence didn't do the work of the infantry either. You know, we were all doing the work of intelligence.

Q: Maybe being a woman had its advantages.

A: But no, I really cannot tell you. Because yeah, it would be more difficult to have sent a young man to Germany my age because he would be in the Army, he wouldn't be walking around. In

that way, yes, it was much more important to have a woman. And anybody who spoke German was important to the intelligence. They had not so many people who spoke German absolutely fluently. I had a Lorraine accent, but I had always said I come from Lorraine. But I told the Germans that my parents died, that everybody was bombed and killed by these horrible Americans. And, do you know, I had a good story, and so that's how things worked. I'm trying to remember where I am.

Q: Well, you were going -- I think you were about to tell me about your efforts to get over the border, but since we only have a couple minutes left on this tape, let's save that. I'm just trying to envision you doing this work and how it might have been different for you as a Jew, as a woman, doing this really very, very dangerous work.

A: Oh, I felt it was my duty to do it. As a Jew and as a French person. I felt absolutely, I could never stand that people say, "You can go to the Army, I don't need to," you know. For example, my cousin, Oscar, who was from Germany, he would never -- he was saved by the French and all that. And I had big fights with him because he would never think of joining the Army, he was not that type, you know. And I told him that that's his duty, to join the Army. That the French give him hospitality, even without knowing he's German, but he still survived of that and he should fight. I was the type . . .

Q: I think you were about to tell me what you actually did for the French Army.

A: Okay. The first time I tried to cross the lines was near Thann which is in Auvergne. And Thann is T-h-a-n-n. And there were quite high mountains, the Vosges, but it was a plain winter and it was snow. I had snow to almost to my waist. And they had organized -- I had joined the Commanders of Africa, which is a unit. And the Colonel of that unit was Bouvet, B-o-u-v-e-t. And I was sent -- I was brought by my intelligence unit to that commando so that they helped cross. And the Colonel Bouvet had a daughter my age, and he took a terrific liking to me. And he helped me -- do you know, he was so worried that something happens to me, so a whole group of people came with me of the Army. A Captain was chief of the group, and then there was at least 10 more people. And some soldiers, three or four more officers and some soldiers,

to accompany me to a certain little way in the mountains, I don't remember how you call that. This sentier in French, which is a small passageway in the mountains. And I had been explained what to do, that I come to that -- they will accompany me to that point, then they would leave me. And I would walk along that little sentier, that little passageway, until I reached the Germans, who would be -- and I knew where I could find them. And the Colonel said, "Just below where you reach the Germans, I am going to have a group of my people watch for you, and if you feel that the Germans have understood what's going on, that they are going to harm you, you scream and they come and get you." You know, they were commanders. "They come to get you. You don't need -- I absolutely want you to be safe." And I went, and that was in the middle of the night and we arrived to that place where they left me. And I started walking, and it was before sundown -- sunup, much before. And it was very gray, it was a lot of snow, very cold. But when I walked, I saw a group of two soldiers, German soldiers, in a post hidden below me. But I continued, I had no intention -- they were looking, they saw. But I had no intention of talking to them because I want to go to the post; I didn't want to talk to them. I wasn't told to do that, you know, I was told to go there. But I knew where they posts, I noticed. But I continued walking, and just when it became a little less gray, I arrived at a little in the mountains. And there were forests, and I came in an intersection of the roads, of the little mountain roads. And suddenly a soldier arrested me, and I thought he was a German, but he was a French soldier. And he was a Moroccan and then there were several Moroccan around him who came towards me, and they want to shoot me because they thought that was a German spy. And I said, "No shooting, no shooting." Because they were telling me, "We are going to shoot you, you dirty German spy." They were insulting me, do you know, in French because they spoke French. They were French soldiers. And I said, "Oh, no" . . .

Q: Could I ask you to stop for a moment?

A: Sure.

Q: Okay. So the Moroccans were ready to shoot you?



A: Yes, and I told them, "Don't shoot. Call your officer," because I knew that they always had an officer. But I didn't know who they were. And then they called their office, and I said to him, "Why was I arrested?" And he said, "Because you walked into here. What are you doing here?" And I said, "Okay, I don't what you are, but call Colonel Bouvet immediately in such-and-such unit," and I gave him the phone number," and tell that I'm with you." And he said, "Colonel Bouvet, how do know him?" And I said, "But I know him." And then I looked at him and I said, "Are you from that unit?" And he said, "Sure." And I said, "You were the people who were supposed to protect me and you arrest me?" And he said, "But you were not walking on the right little passageway. You were walking one below." You know, they are on the hill, there are several. And in the night, the guide took me there. He was an Alsatian from the Barrier, but in the night he made a mistake and put me on the wrong passageway. So I was arrested and then the Germans saw it because they were just a few paces away, but they didn't do anything. They want to see what was going on, and they took me back to the headquarters where I was debriefed and I told them what everything I saw which was very important things I saw. Where resistance was -- do you know, where the Germans had posts in our area where they were watching us and reporting. But it was such a big mountain, you can have a lot of things. So I gave all the information, but I was terribly upset that I had been arrested by the French. And top of it, I could have been shot. They were absolutely ready to do it if I hadn't defended myself. But I had been told how to react to people, you know, what to do in case I was in danger. That was one the premiums you get, how you survive in such cases. So I came back -- first, I was debriefed by another unit and by intelligence, and then I went back to Colonel Bouvet. After that they tried 13 times to make me cross, 13 other times. That was bungled purposely, but the Captain who was the chief of the unit who took me there, he could not accept that his mission was not done right. So he said that I got confused and went on the wrong passageway. And I had a terrible fight with him, and I said absolutely not. And the guide said, "Look, that's enough. No, I made the mistake." So that was okay, but the Captain and I, we were not on the best terms after that. Okay.

Q: Did you and this officer have a . . .

A: Yeah. Right. But after that I tried 13 times to cross, and the second time they let me go in a big field and they were shooting, you know, tracers all over. And it was night, it was always at night, and that was perhaps a week later or 10 days later. And then they let me go and they go this way, but they didn't give me any indication, do you know, a real indication what I should do, and then you will find the Germans. And I walked around at night, I walked in circles. And I heard dogs barking everywhere, but I didn't know where the dogs were, you know. And I walked in circles, and they didn't tell me there was a canal there. And I fell in the canal, never even caught a cold, nothing, I walked all the rest of the night in my wet clothes and I never caught a cold. There was -- you know, you live under such hype that nothing happens to you. But anyway, I walked all morning -- all night, and couldn't find my way because there was snow, there was a canal. There was dog barkings and I didn't know where to go. They had not given me good indications what road to go, how to do it. And toward the morning when it started to be light, I saw a whole unit of tanks with soldiers coming on the road a little far away. Quite far away. And I thought it was the Germans, so I walked toward them. And when I approached, they were speaking French. So they were -- so I was -- but these ones did not try to harm me. Because immediately the officer took me aside and said, "What are you doing here?" And I explained to him, and he got in touch with my unit and they came and got me. But 12 more times -- but most of the time it was very bad. One night they wanted me to cross the River Rhine, swimming in wintertime. I would have died of hyperthermia before I crossed even half of the river. It was so stupid, I said, "That is impossible." Any girl would not survive such a swimming. That is impossible, I couldn't explain that I'd do that. No German could believe so much, you know, that the girls would swim in plain winter through Rhine. So I said that I didn't accept. And then the 15th time or the 13th time -- I think it's the 15th time, I finally made it. But that was well organized -- well, I was sent to Germany through Switzerland. And it's a Swiss agent who picked me up. I was taken by my unit to Basel, you know, to Switzerland? And in Basel, I was met by a Swiss agent who took me to Sachsenhausen which is not very far. And in

Sachsenhausen there is a little enclave, the German road passes near a field which is Swiss, and there is a little -- I remember how it looked and there was a forrest to the left. The road in front of us and to the right was a little enclave -- is a fence. And the Swiss spent all day with me there, and he was -- for me, was an old man. He was God know, he was near his 50s, perhaps late 40s. For me, he looked very old. And he said to me, "Listen, you are surely going to die. Why don't we sleep together? Why don't we have a good time?" And I told him, "Why don't you go and jump in the river? But I'm not going to do such a thing." I had no intention of dying and no intention of sleeping with him. And he cried, but -- and then he told me -- but he was very decent in that way. He did not assault me or anything. He tried verbally to entice me, and his way of enticing me was not very enticing anyway. But anyway, towards the evening, towards dusk, I lie down in the field very close to the road. And I had white knee socks on, and I had the impression that the whole German Army could see my white socks, do you know? You wouldn't believe in what terror I was. It was absolute terror, I could not move. And I think how did I -- what did I get into such a predicament? How can I do it? I cannot do it. And I stayed there quietly, I couldn't bring myself to do it. And at one point, I said I have to do it. No way. And I remembered that that Captain who was Captain Mollet, M-o-l-l-e-t, had said that I had bungled because I had got confused. And that made me do it, and when I came back, I told him that. Boy, was he feeling -- was he embarrassed. In front of everybody I told him of the whole, you know, all the officers of the unit. But anyway, I finally stood up, walked to the road and there were two Germans, sentinels, who were crossing each other. So I walked to -- but were never -- you know, I waited until I see that, and I walked there and I met him. I said, "Heil, Hitler." And he said, "Where are you going?" I said, "To Helsinger," which was a city there, or a little town very close. I don't remember how big that was, very close to that, walking distance, but at night and I walked there and he didn't bother me. He didn't ask for papers, nothing. But I had identify papers of the German \_\_\_\_\_, and my name was Marthe Ulrich, U-l-r-i-c-h. Unfortunately, I lost all these papers, I don't know where they are. They must be somewhere, but I don't know where. I looked for them, and I didn't find them. And I had these papers, and I had coupons for

food and all kinds of things. And I had all places where to go. The first one was in Sink, that's why I walked to Sink. And it was a young -- somebody gave me a recommendation for that family, but they never knew who I was and what I was doing. But I knocked at the door, it was quiet, it was 10 o'clock. Knocked at the door, and they opened -- the woman opened the door. Her husband was in the Army . . .

Q: Something was moving around , or --

A: Was it?

Q: How many minutes left? Why don't you begin you were going to live with this family in Sink.

A: Oh, yeah. I knocked at the door and she opened the door, and she said, "Who are you?" And I told her that such-as-such person -- I don't remember who it was -- recommended me, who was a good friend of hers. That he had told me that I could come to her house and get a room there. That she would, you know, take me in. And she did and she was very nice about it. And the next day, she said to me, "I notice" -- because underneath my socks, my white socks, I had silk socks, you know. She noticed they were all torn. "What happened to you?" And she said to me, "Did you . . .

Q: We need to stop the tape.

A: She had noticed that my silk -- at that time, we had no pantyhose, but silk stockings were completely torn. So she said to me, "What happened?" I said, "I fell," because Helsinger was -- and she told me, you know, "We have so many worries about spies coming over from Switzerland, when I saw your torn socks, stockings, I was afraid of something like that." And I start laughing and said, "Do I look like a spy?" No, I had to absolutely get out of that. And she said, "No, really you don't." And I said, "Don't worry. I'm not one. I'm a good German." So that's how I got out of that. So I stayed with them about two or three days, and then by train, I went to Freiburg which is northwest of Helsinger, and that's not too far from the Rhine, Freiburg. And that's in Germany, not in Switzerland, but there's a Fribourg in Switzerland. And I arrived in Freiburg, and there I had an address, too, to go where a young Alsatian doctor who had been

in Germany had lived with that family, with a man and woman. And he -- they were very good friends, and he told me to -- oh, I never met him. But soon my unit, I knew that he accepted to send me there. So I said I came from him, and I had papers from him. I had some proof that he had, you know, that I had a husband. That he had written me a letter or something. So they accepted me very well, and they never questioned me. And -- but I had another address in Freiburg of the doctor who was Alsatian, and his father was in \_\_\_\_\_ and he asked -- he knew that somebody was going to go to Germany on a mission. And he asked if they would go and see him so that he can help me so he can possibly return to France. Because he had married a German woman and stayed in Germany. He was Alsatian. And I went to see him, and that was terrible fiasco. Because the guy absolutely -- he said, "I am married to German." I told him, I was told to tell him what I was doing there. But his father -- I didn't meet his father again, the father gave the instructions that what I should tell him. And I told him, "I will help you go back to France. You know, the war will be soon over. It's just a question of days now, and I can help you go back to France if you help me. Give me information about what's going on here. Military information." And he said to me, "Oh, how can I do that? I'm married to a German citizen. I cannot do that, absolutely." And then he said, "Where are you staying?" And I said, "I have no address yet. I have not found yet anywhere to stay. I am going to probably travel right away." I was afraid of him, I was terrified. I wanted to get out of there, so I got out as soon as possible and took all kinds of tours to make sure that I'm not followed. But I was never followed. And when the French Army came in Freiburg later, quite later, he looked for me and wanted me to help him go back to France. But I did not accept to meet him, I refused because he had not helped me. He was very atrocious, he would have had arrested me, had he known where to find me. I understood that, and I stayed away from him. But I found other people who helped and they would give me information. The girls, Alsatian girls were in the German Army and were dying to go home. And, you know, I could tell them that I can help them go home, if they help me. And that was a great help. It was the last few weeks of the war. Three weeks, two weeks, I don't remember exactly. Three weeks about. When I came to Germany, I think I was

there about three weeks. But -- and then in Freiburg, I had another address to go outside of Freiburg to a certain place I cannot remember, which extremely close to the Siegfried line. And the last village near the Siegfried line. You could just walk there, 300 yards and you were in the Siegfried line. And I went to that doctor, there was another doctor who I was told to go to. But he wasn't home, and his wife, which was probably very good, but the maid, they fed me because I was hungry. I was walking all the time, and I didn't know where to stop, so I was afraid. But when she asked me, "Would you like something to eat?" I said, "Yes," when I told her I want to see her employer. But walking towards that village, I was with a group of people. Women and there was one non-commissioned officer, an SS, little guy, too. Very little guy. And he was talking about, you know, all the things the SS do. How much they do and how they hate the Jews and how they hate the Poles and how they hate the Russians and what they do to these people. He was talking openly about it, and then suddenly he fainted. He was coming back, he told us that he had been wounded and just came back to Zurich, and he fainted. And I was a German nurse, so I took care of him. So when he came back to it, he was very grateful, you know, that I had been so nice to him. And we became best friends, even if he told me that he could smell a Jew at miles; he had told me. And he told me any time I want to come to the Siegfried line to visit him, he would be delighted and he would introduce me to all his friends. And he gave me his address and told me how to get there. So the day -- I was Freiburg a few days, but then I went back somewhere else, but I cannot remember. I traveled and I was in a bus one day. And in that bus -- but that was in the Offenburg. I think that was near, not too far from Freiburg, but just a distance. Because I was afraid to take trains, and I went, you know, I went with military transports. But they took you, as they took the civilians because they knew that it was very little -- there was very little communication. You couldn't travel very easily. And the Americans were always bombarding, but I was so lucky before I entered the city, they bombarded the city. When I left, they started bombarding the city. But I was there, I was never under bombardment of the Americans, which was good because boy, did they destroy things. And then I went to that Offenburg, and I was in a bus going somewhere and -- because the

transport had told me to say goodbye to the south, to go up the Swiss border where I wanted to go. But they took me to Offenburg to a complete different section. And we were in the -- I remember now. We were in the truck all night, and it was freezing. You know, on the bed of the truck in the back, it was freezing. We were absolutely frozen. It was in winter in Germany in the forrest, and we arrived early morning in a place where the convoy stopped. So we went out of the convoy. There were seven civilians, and we were lying in the fields. And then planes came over, American planes, but they didn't bombard. I was there, so they didn't bombard. And I fell asleep there, I was so tired that I fell asleep. And suddenly more planes came by, so they shook me up. You know, the people around me shook me to awake me. And I was so surprised and I didn't know where I was, and I started to answer in French. That was quite a thing. When I realized they were looking at me very strangely, and I said in five minutes I'm arrested. So I got up and said I needed to go to the bathroom and I run. And I run to a hole, and I find the milkman who came by with the horse and wagon. And I stopped him and he took me to the next city. And that's how I escaped, but I would have been arrested because they looked at me very strangely. They had to think what they were going to do next. But that was the only time where I awoke and spoke French, but it's very difficult not to. And then I took another bus, I don't remember exactly, do you know, the sequence. But I know I was in another bus, and there was only one non-commissioned officer in that bus. And all the rest were women, and that commissioned officer started to tell how they treated Russians and Poles in the East. They were not talking about Jews, that how they treated the Russians and the Poles. How they assembled the whole people, all the people from one village. Put them in a square, and start shooting them with machine guns. It's the ach mein, you know, the Germans speak like that. Ach mein, and slap the side many times and say, "You should have seen running like little mice." It was horrible. And I thought that, and everybody -- all the women laughed. They felt that was very funny. And I had to laugh with them, I had no choice. So I didn't laugh too much, but I had to laugh some.

**End of Tape 4.**

## Tape 5

Q: Okay.

A: One point I wanted to make is that always the German afterwards, after we won the war, always pretended that they did not know, and that's absolutely not true. They knew it because the soldiers came home and they told the story. They told about all these barbaric things. I heard it, I was there only three weeks and I heard it. And how could the people who lived there all the time not hear it? And I didn't know the people who told me then. So they boasted about it openly, so that's a big myth that's the Germans did not know. And I have friends who were in a concentration camp, a young Alsatian, who was later in our unit. And he said -- he was in Dachau or Buchenwald, I don't remember. And he said that when they were taken out on walks to go to the work site every day, there were skeletons, all these people. And there were barely walking, and people in the town would throw stones at them and beat them. On top of -- do you know, all the other brutalities? So these were town people, and they all said, "Oh, we did not know." You know, one German one day recognized what the Germans did to me, and I shook his hand. I said, "You are the only honest German I ever met." It was unbelievable that they absolutely denied the horrible things they all knew they had done. It was no secret. It was impossible to have a secret. So I think that point is very important. Okay, now I go back to my story. I don't know where I am.

Q: Well, you had been to the Siegfried line. You had traveled on a bus . . .

A: Yeah. Then I came back to Freiburg, and I hope that the French were coming that day. I knew they were getting close because -- and there Germans with bazooka in corners, you know at every place where they could hide a little bit and waiting for the French. And I went around, and I was such a good German, and I said, "Oh, my God. I hope nothing will happen to you because you don't know, do you realize I saw them coming from up there? They have enormous tanks coming." They have no more tanks, they have nothing, the German tank in Freiburg. So most of them got down from their post, they got frightened because I told them that. And then I was in the main street when the first tank came. French tank -- no, yeah, French. They were the



French. And I made the V sign like that and stopped it, and I asked that the officer come down. They had quite a few Germans, prisoners, on the tank all over. And I told him, "Please come down, I need to talk to you." And I took him aside and I told him, "I am here. I am part of the Army. I'm in the intelligence. I need to see -- to be taken to the headquarters right now. I need to go there because I have very important information to give them. And he took me and I met Commander Petit, Petit, who was the chief -- he was commander or colonel, I don't remember, of the second Division Zaire, that was the regiment. And that was, too, a regiment from North Africa. And Colonel Petit first was a little leery about me, you know, when he start to question me. And he was -- he didn't believe me. He thought I was making up stories and then he start questioning me. He had been in intelligence, and I told him what information I had, who to contact, how to contact and then ended story and I was okay. So I told him the important information I had. That day, I had gone back to Siegfried line to see my good friend, the little SS, who had invited me to come because I want to see what's going at that Siegfried line. And when I arrived at the Siegfried line and I inquired about him, they were all leaving. The Siegfried line was emptying, the French came down, not south but west -- no, east of the Siegfried line. They did not want to deal with the Siegfried line, but my information was the Siegfried line was empty, not to worry about it. So that was extremely important military information right then and there. So Colonel Petit believed me and he sent out, you know, patrols and they found out that the Siegfried line was empty. So after that, he really believed me. And I was very well treated, and he said to me, "Do you want me to send you back to your unit? I know where they are located." He had gotten in touch with them to tell them I was safe, because they didn't know, didn't have any news from me. And I told him, "No, my mission isn't finished. I have to go back south." Because they were coming not south. The south, nobody was there yet. So I said, "I go back south tomorrow morning, but I will ask you a favor. Find me a bicycle because I'm tired of walking." So he found me a bicycle, and the next morning I left. And I have papers where he said that for that night, to protect me if somebody attacks me and to go through the French line. And he said, "Destroy these papers you arrive." After the

French went, I never destroyed it. I still have them. You know, saying that I should be protected. But under the name of Lelotra. He, too, didn't know my real name, nobody did. So I left the next morning and went south towards the mountains. And when I climbed up the mountains in the Black Forest, it was quite high. And at one point, I was just pushing my bicycle, I couldn't ride it. It was much too incline, steep. So a German soldier was walking there. There were always soldiers all over walking, they didn't know where to go because they didn't know where their units were. They were completely disorganized by then. So he said to me, "I push your bike." So I let him, he pushed my bike up the mountains. What do I care? Well, I don't need to do that, so I let him. And we talked and I always talked to them that I was looking for that fiancé who was lost, do you know that? I didn't know where he was. I always used that, and I told him that I had run away. And I told that everybody when I got out of Freiburg, when I went south, everybody I met from the Army, I told them what horrible experience that was to see the French Army with black people. Would you believe that they have black soldiers and a lot of them and they look terrible? And they're barbaric, I made a big story. They were all terrified, you know, because they had not more organization. They were not structured anymore, they had no real defense. And they were not going to get killed for nothing, so the best thing was to do that and I did a good job at that. And I told them -- and then I went south toward the border because there I had a family I wanted go to see just near the Swiss border. But that was the brother-in-law of the daughter, of one of the daughters of that family was in our unit. And he told me that I can absolutely trust them, not to worry. They wouldn't even know, they knew already that I was going to come. So they knew all about me, and they knew that I was from the French Army. They were very Catholic, Bavaria -- no, Bedouins, you know, from Baden from the territory of Baden and they were very anti-Hitler. So I went to their house, but before I arrived there, I met a whole group of ambulances who were coming from the north going south, too, and east. Because once you arrived to south, you have to go east. You go into [Brest] along the Rhine. And I asked them what they were doing there, and I told them how terribly unhappy I was that Freiburg was taken by these horrible French and

all these blacks and all that I repeated. They told me, "Don't worry. It's here, not far." They told me exactly where, in the forest there is a whole division hidden in the forest and they are going to beat them. And they told me the names and they told me who they were. You know, they were so convinced I was such a good German. And then, I knew that it was imperative to go to that house of the Swiss and to get that information to my partner as fast as possible. That was vital, and I had no radio. I had nothing, the only way I was told that I can give important and, you know, rapidly information was to go to the Swiss and tell them that I'm a Swiss agent. And that's what I intended to do, so I arrived -- I traveled and it was quite a distance. So at night, very late at night, I arrived in a village, in a square of the village. And for some reason I never understood, I sat on a bench and I didn't feel like going anywhere. And in a few minutes a man came by and asked me where I was -- what I was doing there. And I told him that I came from Freiburg, that I escaped the French Army and told him about all that. And then he said to me, "Don't go this way because you are going to be bothered. There is a patrol there, and they bother everybody. They are really a hard group." Boy, I was very happy to have stopped there. Do you know, I had always an instinct I cannot go. And then he told me, "Go to that house near the square. They are very nice people, and they will give you a bed." So I went and they really did, they give me a bed. And I slept there, but very early in the morning I told them I had to be getting up. And I told them the same story, I always told everybody the same story. Their husbands were prisoners of war, and they no news. Or they were killed, they had no news. But anyway, I left the next morning very early and rode to that Swiss border, to that place where I was going. And I arrived late in the afternoon. It took quite a -- it's quite a distance. And I had to write that letter for keeping all that information, and I had no time to do it in code. So I just wrote and the next morning at dawn, the two girls took me to the border which was just a few hundred yards away. And they were -- you know, between the German and Swiss, and they told me, "Go through the barbed wire." And they helped me go through. "Then turn left and you will see a building, that's the Swiss Custom House." But like many people, left and right, they didn't know the difference. So I crossed the barbed wire, went up left and then I saw the building and

knocked at the door. It was -- and nobody answered when I looked in, and I saw swastikas; it was a German Custom House. Luckily they were sleeping, they didn't hear me. And here my letter in my left pocket with my hand on it, I remember that so well. And from far away I turned around and said, "Oh, my God. I'm in the German Customs." And I saw from far away behind a tree a Swiss guy making big swings like that, so I run towards him. But the Germans never woke, because they could have killed me. I run towards the Swiss, and he pulled me behind the tree and said, "What are you doing?" It was a Swiss German, he spoke German only, but I understand him. You know, he spoke more German than Swiss German to me. And I said to him, "I'm Swiss intelligence. I am in the Swiss intelligence, and that letter has to be in Basel at such-and-such office in such-and-such's hands before 11 o'clock this morning." And he saluted me, he said, "It will be done." And it was done, and the Swiss took all the information first, they always did. And then they give it to my unit, and that's one of the things that is written in one of my citations, that I had given that information. And that was very important information, and it saved many lives. And then the Swiss said, "What do you want to do?" And I said, "I return." He said, "Oh, my, you really want to return there?" And I said, "I am not finished," so I returned to Germany to that house, but the Germans never saw me. I don't know how that happened.

What I told you, I'm extremely lucky. And I went back to the house and I stayed that day, and the next morning, I went -- no, the same afternoon with my bike, I went west -- east. I went east to see what was going on because I knew they were coming not south, this way, so I went east to see what was going on this way. And when I arrived at a certain small town, there were a lot of soldiers, of German soldiers. A whole division of them. And I stopped and talked to them and told them, you know, always my story how I had escaped from Freiburg, from these horrible French. And I said, "What are you doing here?" And they said, "Oh, this night we are all going, the whole division is going to go across into Switzerland. Because we want to go to Austria, and we would cross Switzerland." Then I went back along that road, you know, in the south and on the west. And I met -- I arrived in the village very close to this -- you can go any more west, do you know? To the end of the road, before you go up north. So I went out of there with my bike,

and when I arrived in the village, there were white flags all over. And the men said, "Don't go any further. The French are there in the square." And I said, "Oh, I am not going to go toward them, no way." And I run to meet them, and the Germans were horrified when they saw that I was going to them, when I just said, "Oh, don't worry about it." They were, but they couldn't do anything; they were civilians, they were not Army people. And the French immediately I went to, to the officer. He was sitting in a Jeep, and I say, "I want you to take me to your headquarters." Always the same thing. And he said to me, "Why would you go to the headquarter?" I say, "I need to go to the headquarters and talk to your officer." And then I saw an insignia on his uniform, and I said, "You are a second \_\_\_\_\_, aren't you?" And he said, "Yes," that was the same unit I had met in Freiburg. I said, "Then take me to Colonel Petit." And he took me, and Colonel Petit, I don't remember what he was, but Petit was extremely to see me again. And then I gave him the rest of the information and I told him, "You see, if you go east now, at that village is a whole division, but this night they will go over to Switzerland." So he sent me immediately with the Jeep to the General, who was a general with one Army, he had one Army and Petit. And he was called \_\_\_\_\_. That was his -- he always said \_\_\_\_\_, which means there are no Germans. And I was brought to him, and I told him my information. And he looked at me, he didn't -- nothing was important to him. He wouldn't believe me or I don't know what. But anyway, he did not use my information, and he gave orders to attack these Germans, and there were several dead on our side and wounded. And on their side and it was absolutely a waste of time. And then the next night -- no, it was that night, they really went into Switzerland. But you know what the Swiss did? The next morning, they gave them all back to as prisoners. They didn't want them to cross Switzerland. We were too close now. The Swiss have always worked all sides, but at that point, they did not want to do it because we were too close to the end of the war. And we winning, so they had nothing to do with the Germans anymore. They had helped the Germans very much before, but that's the gist of the story. Then I met Colonel Petit and I stayed with that unit until the liberation. Then after that, I rejoined my unit. So that's how the war -- my mission ended.

Q: It sounds very exhausting.

A: What?

Q: Very exhausting. I don't know how you kept up that momentum. All by yourself?

A: You are not tired. You are not tired. You are not cold, you can take it for hours when you are hyped up. It's a complete different -- do you know, I told you I fell in the canal, and I was not even, I never even got a cold. And in plain winter, when all clothes were frozen on me. When the Army found me, they give me uniforms, do you know, of men to change because I was so I was absolutely drenched. I had clothes -- and I never caught a cold or got sick. So you live under different conditions. It's a complete different world. If you made me do that now, I would die. I wouldn't be able to. So . . .

Q: An amazing story. You accomplished quite a bit on your own. Were you -- did you ever feel terribly isolated or . . .

A: Yeah, but the mission was so important to me. Once I had the courage to go through, then everything was forgotten. I only thought about the mission and what I wanted to do. And I wanted to do it the best possible -- I found prisoners of war, French prisoners of war who gave me information. Do you know I tried to get information from whoever could give me some information? That's what they say, that I built a Reseau, you know, a group of information.

Q: And your family didn't know about this?

A: Oh, no. Nothing, nothing. They absolutely had no inkling. During the whole time I was in Germany, I had written letters in advance dated once a week, and the letters were sent to them by one of my friends. They were absolutely -- they had absolutely no idea. When I told them, they couldn't believe it. They believed me, but they were very surprised.

Q: You stayed in the French Army?

A: Yes, I went to Vietnam after. Oh, first I stayed, I was awarded. They had promised me a lot of things. And we were first in Constance, my unit was first in Constance, which is a city on the Lake of Constance, not far from Switzerland. And there I had to live in the same building as the captain I talked to before. And after a few days when it was absolutely verboten to have any

relationship with the Germans, and I didn't feel like having any relationship with the Germans. You know, social relationship. He invited Germans who were businesspeople who he was trading with them. God knows what. But he was making business with them, he was an Alsatian. And he obliged us all to a dinner with the Germans, and I got up -- when they came in, I got up and left. That's another thing to talk about. No man could have done that. So he put me in arrest, you know. I had to stay in my room, and then he wrote me a note that I had to be shipped back to France. That he didn't want me anymore, and I was not going to accept that. So I called the Colonel Bouvet, who was not too far away. His headquarters was not too far away. And immediately he sent a Jeep for me, and with it I under arrest but I left. And I went to Bouvet, and Bouvet called the superior of that captain in our department. I knew him, but I could not call him. So Bouvet called him and asked him to get -- to receive me, that I had something very important to him. So he immediately accepted, and I was driven by a chauffeur off to Bouvet with a Jeep to that place. And I told that commander, that major what happening. He was an Alsatian, too, and a friend of the captain, but he was horrified. And he said to me, "You know, in you papers, in your file is a note that I will never forget. That after having been in so much danger and doing all what you did, you refused the financial reward." And at that time we really needed it, because my brother had eaten up all his savings, you know, for keeping the whole family alive during the whole war. But I couldn't be paid for such a war, so he said that's in your file. And after that he has done that to you? And then he punished him. He was demoted and sent away from Constance, which was a marvelous city. And I was put in another unit. I was transferred to another unit where I was very happy. And that in Linz. I was in Linz, my unit was a little outside of Linz. They were living in the villa of -- what's his name. Not Himmler, but one of the big chiefs, you know, of German Nazis. Above the Constance, it's still the Constance Lake, but that was at the other side in Bavaria near Austria. Near the Austrian border. So I was in that place for quite a while, and they awarded by making me the chief of the department where every German wanted to come into French Bavaria had to ask my authorization. And I organized that exactly like the Germans had organized in France. I learned

from them. They had to be fingerprinted, they had to give me a picture, and at the same time that work was a front for intelligence work that I was continuing to do. And the intelligence work, which is not very nice as allies, was to send people to investigate what was going on in the British, the American and the Russian sectors. And we all did it, they did it to us; we did it to them. In Landau when I was in that department, one day the French police came and arrested my secretary, a German who was an agent of the Americans. You know, so we were back and forth, you think that's intelligence if you never see it. And our lives are not the lives you do that, you do these things.

Q: Weren't you honored by the French Army?

A: Yeah, I had two citations. I had really -- I had applications for three citations -- not my application. But I was three times, I was supposed to get citation. I got two. And that captain who had done the horrible things to me because of the Germans that he invited, he got a citation for my work at the highest grade. And he said to me, "You will get it, it's a silver medal, because nobody will give you more than that." And I couldn't care less at the time, but he got the highest, you know.

Q: What were your citations?

A: They are about my work. Oh, they were \_\_\_\_\_, two quad a guerre (ph) from the Army. One was signed by General Schwin (ph), and the other one was signed by De Lapp (ph), General De Lapp.

Q: You've been really gracious with your time. We've been here a long time. Maybe you can tell me very briefly how you -- you know, what you did after the May 1945 end of the war.

A: Yes. After staying in Linz for several more months, in February of '46, I volunteered for Indochina. And I went to Indochina where I stayed until December '48, which is almost three years. And I was first in Phnom Penh for eight or nine months. Phnom Penh in Cambodia. Then I was in Da Nang arrived right after Ho Chi Minh started the revolt against the French, which started in December of '46, not before. When I went it was against the Japanese. The



Japanese Army was still there, most of them were prisoners. But we had a lot of snipers, and that's what we were fighting at that time until Ho Chi Men started this revolt in December.

Q: Were you in nursing and intelligence?

A: I was nursing, purely nursing. No more intelligence, I needed to go back to reality. I had a very swollen head, and it was not healthy. And I wanted to lead a normal life, go back to normal life. And that was the only way. If I had stayed in intelligence, God knows what have happened to me.

Q: So you thought going to Indochina was a normal life?

A: Yes. That was normal life. It was going back to my profession. But I loved the Army, I was happy in the Army. I felt it very interesting. I felt I did not want to get married, I had decided -- I had absolutely decided after my fiancé was killed that I would never get married until I met my husband. I changed my mind. But it took me 11 years, pretty good. But I went to Indochina and after Da Nang I was several months in Da Nang where the fighting was ferocious around Da Nang where it started. The whole thing started there. Then I was sent for a whole year into Quang Tri, which was the DMZ. And after that I went to Da Lat in the mountains. That was a war, and I finished my time and then I came home. But in Quang Tri to go when we left Da Nang for Quang Tri, I became the head of the ambulance. It was not a march unit, because we were only team. But we were a team going in the front where we were needed, and I organized that. I was asked to organize that, and I found all the equipment and all the supplies and everything. I had to find it because the Army doesn't like to give you things. But that's how -- and then later I was in nursing in Da Lat in the mountains. And then I came home in '48, in December '48 I came home. And I lived first in Poitiers for until 1953, and in 1953 I went to Geneva in Switzerland where my older sister was living because she had married a Swiss violinist of the Roman Orchestra. And they invited me to join them, because my sister and I were very close and we are still very close. And I went there and I became -- I entered nursing school to get the Swiss degree. Red Cross school, where I was very unhappy. Because I was a French citizen, they made me do all the cleaning. And the student nurses were doing the care of

patients and I was the cleaning woman. But I finally got my diploma, and then I worked in the hospital as a chief nurse, in the Department of Neurology for quite a while. And I did other things in Geneva, and then when I met my husband in December of 1953. And in '56, he had finished his studies, and he asked me to come with him to America, but we were unmarried when we came. I want first to see if I could adopt here. And, you know, it was insured. You come to America, but God knows what happens once you are here if we are going to get married or not. But finally I went to -- first, I worked at Bethel Israel Hospital in Newark, New Jersey for six months to learn English and to make a little money. And then I went to school at Washington University to become a nurse and in '58, I graduated. In August of '58, and in January of '58 we got married. Because my husband came, he first was an intern at Brooklyn Jewish in New York, and then he came to Washington as a resident. And then when we first were able get both fellows then we got married in New York religiously. My mother came to make sure that we got married by a rabbi. And then we moved back to St. Louis. After a while, we moved to New York, where I worked at New York Hospital and my husband worked at Memorial Cancer for the -- Memorial Hospital for Cancer Research at Sloan-Kettering. He was a resident and a fellow, and then we moved to Minneapolis where he did a master's in biochemistry. And then we moved to Pittsburgh where he did a Ph.D. in biochemistry, too, and nutrition and -- no, in Minneapolis, it was endocrinology. In Pittsburgh, it was biochemistry and nutrition and public health. And he got his Ph.D. and then he worked at the same hospital where I worked at the University Hospital at [Magee] Women's Hospital and I started to do research with him. I became his assistant in the lab. He told me yes, you can do research because you are good in the kitchen. You know how to cook, then you can do research, too. I start research and we quite successful. Then we came here.

Q: To California?

A: Yeah, to Los Angeles where we were offered by a former colleague a job at Martin Luther King Hospital, which is -- and Drew Medical School. And the four first years were tough, we were okay. We did very good work and we were very marvelous with our research. The

research was in anesthesiology, and, you know, how to make -- how anesthetic make you sleep, because nobody knows what sleep is. And how you awaken, all this research. And then we got in trouble, and we had to go to have -- we had two big trials, and we finally won the trial for discrimination, racial and religious discrimination. Which was quite -- it took us nine years.

Q: That you were discriminated against?

A: Yeah. By the black administration. Not the people we worked with, but the administration and the school. The administration of the hospital and the school. But we finally won, but last year. It took us since '84.

Q: And you had children . . .

A: Yeah, yes. I cannot forget that. In 1960, I had the first son, Stephan, who is a doctor in Chicago. And he's married and has a little girl who is three years old, Anna Regina. His wife is Barbara. And then in 1964, I had my second son, Benjamin, who you will see later here. And he is an EMT, emergency medical technician in San Diego. He lives in San Diego. So . . .

Q: Let me just ask you a couple of questions.

A: Sure.

Q: And then we'll introduce the family that's here.

A: Sure.

Q: Your life was disrupted at a pretty early age.

A: Sure.

Q: Do you have certain regrets, resentments?

A: No, I never have. I only regret that people were destroyed, but for my personal life I never regretted. Because I went ahead, I never let it stop me. And my whole family was like that, they all, you know, did -- they all studied or did what they needed to do. And the one who did the most sacrificing was my oldest brother, Fred. So -- because he supported the whole family.

Q: What do you think gave you the strength to accomplish what you did? Did that come from your family? Was it . . .

A: What?

Q: What gave you the strength to accomplish all that you did in very difficult situations?

A: Survival is a very strong instinct, very strong. That's one thing, and revenge is another very strong instinct. You know, I want really revenge. I felt -- and I felt that it as my duty to do it. It was not only -- revenge was important, to get even for all the things we had been going through.

Q: After having all these extraordinary experiences, was it difficult to return to a more conventional lifestyle?

A: Oh, yes. Very much. But with time, it was okay. But the beginning was very hard because I loved to be in the Army. I had lots of friends, excellent friends. And a whole group of friends. And they spoke highly of me, you know, because of what I did. My reputation always followed me wherever I went. You know, there was always somebody who knew about what I had done, and they told everybody around them, I didn't. But when I went out and I had -- for certain things. Usually, I didn't carry -- wear them much. But when I wore my decorations when I had to, that always made a big -- a big splash.

Q: What were the difficult adjustments?

A: To just live normally. You know, without the excitement, without all the danger, without the adventures. It was very adventurous to be in Vietnam, too, very. Even as a nurse, and I loved the country. It was a very interesting country. I loved it. And it was so different of what I had known before, and I took care a lot of natives. Because we were taking care of our soldiers, but we were taking care of the natives, too.

Q: Can you talk for just a minute about what the long-term impact of all these experiences is?

A: What is that?

Q: What sort of a long-term impact these experiences have had on you in terms of the way you've lived your life, in terms of your values or your fears or lack of them.

A: Oh, fears, I have plenty of fears. I hate the dark, I cannot stand dark. And I don't deaths, you know. I am afraid of these things, and I don't hide it because I don't feel it's important. And my values have not changed much. I was very religiously brought up, but when I was 13 I absolutely revolted against everything. My mother said always that I was brandishing the red

flag of revolt. I was -- my older brothers and sisters didn't do that, they were much too respectful. I was respectful to my parents, too, but I was always revolting against what I thought was right. Or when I raised my children, I raised them religiously. They went to religious school, I went with them to the temple. I even went to learn Hebrew with them so I can help them with their homework. I did all these things, but I never pushed religion down their throat, and I felt that I had -- you know, in my environment, religion was governing every minute of life. And that, I felt, was too much when I was a kid. But I am, I wanted my children to be raised religiously.

Q: Do you consider yourself religious today?

A: I never know. I don't know. It's very difficult. I think I believe in God, but I don't know how much. I never knew. Since I'm 13, I don't know. Before that I absolutely believed, but since then it's difficult to know.

Q: What about the traditions of Judaism?

A: Oh, yeah. I believe in traditions, absolutely. And I believe in Israel, and I believe, you know, in keeping the traditions we keep. My husband is absolutely not religious; he was raised religiously. But we keep all the holidays and we always have lived as a family, you know, in keeping the holidays.

Q: Why don't we introduce you husband . . .

A: Sure.

Q: . . . and son? Why don't you stop tape, okay? Do you want to introduce them?

A: Yes. Behind me to my right is my father, is [Captain Major] Al Cohn, my husband. We were married in February of 194- -- no, 1958. And here's my son, Ramie Benjamin, who was born on April 13th, 1964. Is my second son.

HUSBAND: My wife has always been the strong member of the family. Is her son, she'll tell you. And he turned out fine, it's because of her. She has an inner strength, which has always been there. And I think you heard it on the tape, as well.

Q: Were either of you kind stunned by your mother and wife's accomplishments?

HUSBAND: Well, I knew very little about what she had done during the war. I heard more after we were married. I knew she had come back from Vietnam and that was really impressive. And I was impressed that she took a strong position against the United States at that time, when she lived here entering the war. Telling them the results would be the same as what happened to the French. Ramie has been fine.

SON: I knew even less than the little that he did. I'm just now learning a lot about what she did. What she went through, what she experienced. And I must say it's all pretty amazing. I'm impressed about the way things were handled as far as I know so far.

Q: It's an extraordinary life.

SON: More than what I'd want to go through, I must say.

A: But you . . .

SON: I'm not sure I'm strong enough to go through, so . . .

A: It depends on the circumstances. If you are thrown in certain circumstances, you are going to go through what you never thought you could do, that's all.

HUSBAND: She did that as a family, too. When we had extremely difficult times, she was just as strong as all her experiences during the war. And he put us through a lot of challenges, as well.

SON: I thought this was about her.

Q: . . . if you survived those, as well, you're all here.

HUSBAND: Yes. We're only missing my oldest son who lives in Chicago with his family.

Q: Anything you all want to say?

HUSBAND: No, I love my wife and sons.

SON: We love our mother, and that's about . . .

A: That's true for me.

HUSBAND: Short but sweet, what can we say?

Q: Thank you all for patience.

HUSBAND: Thank you.

SON: Thank you.

Q: Okay, we're just going to do this for a couple minutes so we need silence except for your mother. What is this photograph?

A: Oh, this is my grandfather, the Rabbi -- he was \_\_\_\_\_.

Q: Do you know when this was taken, this photograph?

A: I don't know. I cannot remember, but it must be -- he died when he was about 78 from a heart attack. He died suddenly. That's -- I don't know when it was taken, but it was in the later years. On the left on the horse is my former fiancé, Jacques De la Rae (ph) who was killed. He was tortured and shot by the Germans in 1942 in October, I think October 6th, 1942. Next to him is his brother, Mark, the last brother who was killed, shot the same day with his brother and two other friends who had formed a group of resistance against the Germans. And they were caught and tortured first and shot later on the Val-de-Marne in Paris. This photograph must have been taken in the spring of 1942, but I can see leaves, it must have been in the spring. And the first -- I am not sure. Okay, the first person to the right is our instructor, Ms. Valez (ph). The next person to her is the directress of the school of Red Cross, Ms. -- now, I cannot remember.

Q: Is this in Marseilles?

A: I am next to her, and in the back -- in the back of my picture half-hidden is \_\_\_\_\_, the young lady who saved our life by making us come to her house before leaving the occupied France for unoccupied France.

Q: This was in Poitiers?

A: That's in Poitiers. That was the Red Cross School of Nursing which was in the hospital of the university, and the hospital was run by Catholic nuns.

Q: You can't point.

A: No.

Q: You can just tell us that you're in the middle front.

A: Yeah. I am on the left of the Directress of the school who is much older than we are. I am standing just left to her. This is my sister, Stephanie, who was deported on Yom Kippur Day

1942 to Auschwitz, and she never came back. She was a medical student when she was arrested in Poitiers in July, end of June 1942. And then she went to prison and to camp in Poitiers then Drancy and then Pithiviers. And from Pithiviers, she was deported to Auschwitz.

**Conclusion of interview.**