

Janine Godkine

Photographed with her husband Georges

Wartime Experience: Hidden

I was born June 13, 1925 in Paris. My parents had owned a shoe store for more than forty years. They worked hard but they had a good clientele. My brother (four years younger than I), my sister (nine years younger) and I went to a secular school.

We had no problems until the arrival of the Nazis in Paris and the new laws with the help of the Vichy government. To be “en règle”, we declared ourselves as Jews and my father had to endure the words “Jewish boutique” on the store window.

Then an “Aryan boss” was appointed who blocked the bank account of my parents. I was fifteen and I saw my mother cry at the confiscation of her assets at the bank. My father, fearing the worst because he had a strong accent, fled to the Free Zone and asked us to follow him a short while later. But I wanted to continue my studies and take exams even while wearing the obligatory yellow star.

After a year, my father forced us to leave everything and we passed the line of demarcation, taking enormous risks. Then we moved to a small house in Chateauroux in the center of France. My father stayed six months in the cellar where we secretly brought him food. My brother and I found work.

My grandparents, two grandmothers and my grandfather were elderly, and we thought it safer to place them in a country house owned by relatives. When one of their sons, a war prisoner, was liberated, he went to the countryside to look for his parents. They were who were supposed to join us but were denounced, and they were all arrested along with many other members of the family in Vaires sur/ Marne.

In all, thirty-three people in my family were deported. Only one returned from Auschwitz. She was treated in Sweden for three months and rejoined us at the Liberation. My father was able to get back his empty store. We all had to work in order to survive. That is where I met my husband Georges. We were married in 1949 and we had two children. My husband had been a prisoner in Germany for five years.

Des dossiers du Mémorial de la Shoah-Paris

Janine GODKINE

née à PARIS le 13/06/1925

Enfant cachée

Mes parents détenaient depuis 40 ans un commerce de chaussures. A l'arrivée des nazis, mon père a dû supporter de voir apposer sur la vitrine du magasin « boutique juive ». Un commissaire gérant aryen a bloqué le compte bancaire de mes parents. J'avais 15 ans et j'ai vu mon père pleurer. Mon père a aussitôt pris la décision de quitter PARIS. Nous l'avons suivi un an après. Nous nous sommes installés à CHATEAUROUX. Mon père s'est caché dans la cave pendant 6 mois où nous lui portions en cachette des victuailles. Par la suite nous avons quitté CHATEAUROUX pour nous installer à la campagne, dans une maison que mes parents possédaient. Après-guerre mon père a pu récupérer son magasin vide, bien entendu. Beaucoup de monde de ma famille a été déporté. Seule 1 est revenue après avoir été soignée pendant 3 mois en SUEDE