

ORAL INTERVIEW WITH DR. NICOLE KENNEDY

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My French name was Nicole Jeanne Marie Souquet-Basiege. It is a little difficult so I will give it in writing. I was born on Paris, France. I'll give you names of my parents too in writing. [Louis and Marguerite Souquet-Basiege who are deceased] I have I still do have three brothers and one sister. A sister who chose after the war to go and live in the United States with one of the military men who came to save our country and took her with him and she is still living in the United States today. But she is much older than me, so she knew the war as an adult and I knew the war as a child. I went to school in what we call lycee in France which is a high school [equivalent to the United States of America's elementary] but because I began my studies as a child at the time of the war started all my high school experience took place during the war which means that I had to move with my family according to the changes of event from one high school to another so I went to many high schools. After high school I was very ill. I also lost my parents, so after a number of years of being taken care of in what we call a sanitorium which is a place where people have tuberculosis are taken care of and nursed and cured hopefully. My parents had died and, I could not during those years pursue my studies. When I came back, I wanted to go back to school And I did a degree in Paris. [A] Cambridge degree through a extension of Cambridge University in Paris that is how I mastered English but much later. As I always wanted to come to this country since I was

a child and liberated by the Americans I dreamt of coming here and live here. Many years later when I finally came to this country in 1961. After raising my kids, I have two children a boy and a girl, that I went back to school and I did the whole American university track from scratch to get my degrees in the American way. And naturally specialized so I could someday teach and of course teach languages particularly French and French history and French literature and language and everything became my specialty so I did my masters degree in San Francisco and I did that for fun at San Francisco State University and my Ph. D. at U. C.- Berkeley which is also California in the Bay Area and obviously along the way I was teaching while doing my studies and raising my kids who still teenagers and when I was finished I already had a lot of experience teaching. I taught in California and eventually applied for fall its called tenure track at the university and one of the universities that asked me to come and that I liked was Northern Michigan where I came two and half years ago. And I moved my whole life here and I started teaching here. After I spent almost thirty years in California and before that in France and of course in other countries because I did quite a bit of traveling too. My children are now the age to have their children and they do. So I have also three grand children from one child my daughter who is I think twenty-eight and two children two little girls from my son who is two years older. I already ...

We are going to back in time now and I'll answer some of your questions about the war. I was a child living in Paris. My mother

had quite a school and she was herself quite an educated women which was unusual those days. We had a summer place on the Atlantic Ocean where during the vacation we would go and many of her students would also come because she had she and my father had three homes by the sea and all these young people had a chance to come to have some vacation there in those places because in one of those at the end of summer that after experiencing whatever childhood that I had before which was not many years. For the first time in my life I profoundly realized that there was something deadly that had just happened. We were in the I believe in the living room in that house on the beach. The radio was on and everybody around me who was about three sizes above me were still and silent suddenly and all that could be heard was the radio voice was announcing the declaration of war by Hitler. The silence was just deadly. I'll never forget it how it hit me, because I knew something very, very bad had just happened and I was immediately scared. I could feel the fear in the room on the part of all these older adult people in the room. After that it is very fussy because my family immediately split for fear of the invasion of the Nazis. Obviously one of your questions is- did your family and you believe that Hitler would move into France. No, we did not two years before the war was declared definitely not. It was only about a year before and when we saw that Germany had already invaded Poland and that they were coming closer and closer from one country to the next. Then we knew that they were going to be arriving in France as well. We also knew that they had no business

being in any other country besides their own. But that they were advancing. When they came very close to being at the frontier of our country there was tremendous massive fear on the part of the people because they did not know we the people what was going to happen to us. We had lived in the past and we all knew from our history even me as a child that periodically in the past two thousand years the Germans have been called the Prussians before and before that the Huns were mean fierce people that would just loot and rape and kill and slaughter and destroy everything on their way. We thought it was going to happen to us. So the families mostly all our families began to get organized with two things in mind one preserve the lives and protect their children and two try to keep the minimum that they could as they were moving away trying to escape somewhere where they would not be attacked by the Germans that were entering the country. The radio fed us information that not to panic that the German troops were coming in but not would not attack they would not kill, they would not rape, they would behave themselves but that was not something that could be believed by many of us. And therefore there was indeed a huge exodus those first months of the news of the arrival of the Germans on the part of many, many families including our family that I can remember because it was very scary for a child. People could not take all their belongings, so they abandon their house with whatever they could. They had carts. They would put blankets, coats and warm shoes anything that would be practical whatever money they would have, they would take minimum food with them

because they did not know how long they would be on the road and they did not know where they would end up and you had these long, long files of families pushing carts and strollers with the kids holding the hands of their little kids, women pregnant and at the time of course men as well and children that would be walking in long, long files on the roads of France and Where I was at the time I saw the files of those people trying to get to any form of transportation that could get or simply walking and walking where. Nobody really knew exactly except they were leaving their houses. We had been told the houses would be burned and we knew we didn't want to be in there. As a child, I had only two crucial memories personally as I was to leave as well as this house we had been spending the holidays for many years. I had a friend. It was a grey hen. Actually it was in our garden. We had rabbits, chickens, and little tiny chicks and I had befriended a hen, a beautiful gray fat hen, and I did not want to leave her. And of course my mother or grandmother I'm not too sure explained to me that I had to go and that I could not take the hen with us. Anyway very shortly it was pretty sure that people would have nothing to eat. So I was even more afraid that if I left my hen someone would take her and eat her. Well finally a neighbor I was taken to a neighbor who was not leaving and the house was run by two women and I still remember they were standing on the landing of their house. And I was holding my grey hen in my arms and I was crying and was bringing that hen like an offering to these ladies who were going to take care of it and I didn't know these ladies.

And I told them please don't kill her, please don't eat her and of course I gave up the chicken. I know that they will have needed to kill it at some point to eat because meat was precious during the war. We don't have we didn't have any so that would have been a real banquet. Anyway

As for as the the arrivals of the Germans, I saw them arrive and I saw people run and panic. That very shortly we realized that indeed generally speaking the soldiers were not attacking, were not killing. They were requisitioning which means they were taking the houses of people to put their own people in it so that sometimes a house would be occupied for three quarters of the German Army. And a part would be kept by the family and sometimes they would just have to go somewhere else. The Germans took over the whole place so you lost your home. It is also a fact that a lot of the soldiers shared the same transportation as we did. And I remember as a child again, probably reading but probably taking the bus back to Paris I guess where my mother was I was left in the country with my grandmother alone to take care of me. In the bus, that was was very crowded. All the transportation was so crowed you couldn't breathe and I was a very little thing that would be suffocated if I had been standing in the middle of all these crowds. And a German soldier picked me up and sat down and put me in his lap and I remember the expression of my Grandmother. She was so afraid and she just hated him just because he was a German. And I knew he was not going to do me any harm. I could feel it. That was my instinct and I didn't mind. The French who wanted our country to

be free had a little tri-color emblem that we would wear blue white and red the colors of the flag. And those little emblems we would wear, it was a message to the German occupation obviously. But it was not an attack and usually they would let us do that. But I was wearing mine and when I left the bus with my Grandmother it was gone. And I understood later on when I was older that probably the German soldier was a guy just like anybody else and he didn't want to be there. He was obeying orders. he was probably German army and probably had a kid himself and wanted a little souvenir. He just took it from my lapel as a souvenir. These are little types of things that I remember. Another souvenir I have as a child is also in that summer house where we were able to stay for awhile. My Grandmother and I playing piano and it was evening and a German officer came to the door, the back door, the French door and he opened it and entered the room. And of course I turned back and stopped playing the piano and he saw in the corner of the room instruments of music violins. My father played violin and my mother played piano. He went to the violin and he picked up the box and he opened it. And I just knew as a child what he was doing and what was happening. He had heard that music played by a little girl and music is international and music is beauty and music is home and he was longing to be home, I'm sure. And he came in just to hear the music played by a little girl. It was probably a German composer I was playing anyway and he wanted to play because he knew how to play and he wanted to play and hear music. I'm sure that was what was going in his head. Otherwise he would

have done something mean, but the moment he picked up the violin my grandmother entered the room from the dining room into the living room where he was playing. She saw him and she went berserk. She left the room immediately. She screamed at him and she told him to get the hell out of there and what are you doing there. She brandished the only thing she had at him as a weapon and which was a broom. Threatening him, forcing him to get out. And naturally its a very courageous thing to do and mostly a very foolish thing to do because this guy was armed. He had guns. He could have killed her if he had been the mood. He could have killed me too. She couldn't resist. She couldn't resist. She had to get him out of the house. He was the enemy and me as a child I was watching this scene and it was different somehow I sensed that it was not an enemy there. It was a human being who was thrown in the middle of this mess just like I was. Just like so many others were. And he was not really acting as a soldier. He was acting as a young man who was lost and longing for his country and his language. These are some of the memories I have when we were still my grandmother and I in the country but with time we had to move. Of course I had to go back to Paris to another city of France. One by one we lost all these houses. My parents well the two houses we had in Paris were bombed and destroyed. The house where I had lived in as a child in the country was all bombed and destroyed and we went to another city in Nantes which is west of France on the Atlantic and we lived there for two years. It was an apartment where the whole family lived and where I did my schooling. And the last day that

we lived there having made all the arrangements to go back to Paris after living there for two years began a tremendous serious bombardments of the city and for three days it didn't stop. And we left that first day and the last two days of the bombing that place was destroyed. We could have been killed if we would have stayed. So for us we lost all our fortune, our houses, our belongings and whatever we had during the war and my parents had to start from scratch later after the war, but not our lives. Only a very close member of the family who was like a brother but he was a cousin and he lived with us through the war, and he was sent by the Germans to the German working camp of young men and was killed there. And he never came back. That was a real, real catastrophe in the family when we heard the news. My father, the very first year, when Germans were approaching actually was called for the armed forces and he went to war. He was of course a young man and they all were and he was taken prisoner within six months and he ended up camp prisoners camp during the duration of the war. So we did not have a father with us during all these years. What's the consequence? We are now in the city where the Germans live. They occupy and have the power and our daily life is changed from the usual French routine to now the German routine. We have to learn German in school. The Germans because of the tremendous number of men that they have to feed and to lodge and occupying all the best places including private homes as I told you earlier. They also take all the food, so that we end up having on a daily basis no bread, no milk, of course no butter, no meat, no fish. We have eaten I have

eaten during those five years rutabagas and turnips with an occasional carrot. We would have occasionally thanks to my mother who had to fend for herself, because there was no more men in the family as he was a prisoner. She would try to feed us by walking up to fifty miles sometimes with a stroller out into the county to try to gather something to eat- anything carrots, turnips, potatoes. The rest was very hard to find if at all possible to eat. So occasionally she would get let say thirty kilos of carrots and she would bring that back on foot. Then it would be cooked in all possible forms you can cook carrots or turnips or rutabagas which means that would be boiled or made into some kind of mixture of rutabagas and little flour maybe mix to make something like a cake. You'd have carrots for breakfast, for lunch, and for dinner and you would eat carrots and carrots until there was nothing else that is all you ate. You couldn't eat anything else because there was nothing else. If you had carrots it was a luxury. Once upon time, she would be able to get lets say some eggs but if you were able to have one egg per person that was almost impossible luxury. They would fix the eggs and you would just have a tiny little portion like this about one inch, . thick of egg to eat but that was thin. There was no coffee, there was no tea. We have all kinds of substitutes for those things. People invented anything to have something that vaguely tasted like coffee and its called Chicory. Chicory is a plant and it would be mixed with water so you could have this liquid that would at least be hot. That is what we have for coffee. They called it Piss because it looked like it. It had

the color.. I remember being hungry all the time. I was so hungry sometimes that I would go to the kitchen just go on my hands and knees crawling all over trying to find crumbs anything anything to find anything and there was nothing, nothing. Everything was empty. At that time, we had no fridge mind you anywhere. That time we didn't have much electricity either. Electricity could not be used in evening because it would attract attention, so we were to dim all our lights and we painted the bulbs blue and we would cover them so there would hardly be no light coming out at all so no one would know that somebody was living there including of course the planes. We couldn't go out at night. I think the curfew which German's rules of living was by 7:00 at night everybody had to be indoors. If you were outdoor you risked your life literally because you were to them a subversive. We could go to school but there was no transportation, so wherever the school was you had to walk and nobody could take care of you. There was no money, there was no car, there was nobody to take you there, there was no school buses nothing. You went on your two feet wherever it was. I remember walking at least a hour and half one way to go to school everyday at one period. In Paris, my school days were of course I had to go like everybody else were usually in the classroom lets say for one class and then at the beginning of the next class we would hear the sirens and that meant there was going to be another bombing and it was always the sound the sirens telling us to get into the shelters, so the teacher would take us all into the basements of the school and we would be there in the basements with

whatever paper we were studying and the class would take place there in the midst of all these noises of bombs falling all over the place and the hissing of the guns, detonations from the bombs and what have you until we would hear the siren again to tell us the alert what is was called was over and then we would get out. Useless to say during that period of schooling you hardly learn anything and as I told you earlier we had no supplies what so ever. It was because the schools were completely impoverished. It was a miracle even that we would have teachers still even had a teacher that would pay that would teach us anything. But as I told you earlier we had a half pencil for a whole semester and one little notebook, we would suppose to use that and not waste it. We didn't have any textbooks. The teacher was teaching whatever they could and we learned whatever we could. Once a day, we were distributed kind of a cracker and we were told that those crackers were given to us by our Grand Father and liberator-Petain. Marshall Petain was a Frenchman who had been a hero in World War I. World War II, he was at the head of the government. He made decision not to fight back the Germans to avoid blood shed. And he became what was called a ... It is very hard to give it name because those decisions are so difficult to make an he didn't at the same time didn't want to marry the enemy. But those people are called collaborator, but I was told as a child basic things. And as a child I believe what I was told and therefore to us kids Marshall Petain was the man who was bringing us something to eat, because we were given a cracker which he made possible for us to eat and

that cracker it was like ... It was the best food we ever had during that time. It was a real cracker and it was an important time of day when we got the cracker.

My mother was a tremendous fighter during the war. She raised five kids plus one who died, the cousin, by herself plus she managed to harbor, rent, and make possible for hundreds of young people your age-students. She fed and sheltered those students by the hundreds. Their families paid her for their shelter and food. Families that could afford it. Some families were very rich still and had lot of money. With the money of one student, sometimes she was able to feed actually and help hundreds for maybe two weeks and then she would get a little money from somebody else and with that money she was... That's how she survived and made us survive during the war. She also was protecting a number of those young people because they were Jews. My mother was a fantastic women who had no prejudices who believed that every human being was equal to any other human being. And she was not about to let those young men to be arrested by the Nazis and she was very courageous. She harbored Jews all during the war and she was visited by the Gestapo. I don't know if you heard of them the Nazis officers who were looking for young people that are Jews and she held on. And she managed to protected them and save them from being arrested but at her own risk. Because if she had been found out she could have been tortured. She could have been killed and us too, but she did it. She was unable to protect her own great, my cousin from being arrested. He was not a Jew. He was just taken as all young men

were sent to Germany to work in Germany for the Germans. I think the war hit most at people like her or like my older brothers and sister because they knew what was going on. They knew what was going on. They knew the price to pay. They knew the risks much more than I knew as a child. When my mother received the German officers and spoke to them and did all these things, I was not aware at that time of what the tremendous risks she was taking. I was not quite clear as to why my father was gone. Week after week, months after months I didn't see you. I didn't have a father. I didn't know where he was gone. I didn't understand those things as a child but the older ones did. My brothers and sister were already teenagers and in their early twenties. They knew what was going on much more, and it was much more difficult for them obviously in many ways. But we all were hungry in the same way. We all suffered in the same way. I think one of the worst things for me and for us during the war besides the hunger was the dirt. You see we didn't have soap anymore. Most houses in France didn't have running water at that time. Some houses didn't even have running water period. We had no showers. We had no bath this came only later much, much later twenty years later. I think I took my first bath because I was able to find a bath tub when I was fifteen or eighteen years old. Anyway the dirt. See the German army brought with them a glob of dirt because of the lack of everything for us. We couldn't clean. We couldn't shampoo, so what happens when you live in those conditions. You can't buy anything. You can't clean. You get dirty. You get Itchy. You

get scurvy type stuff. You get skin allergies. You get your head full of lice. And I'll never forget that as a child every week regularly we had to go through this horrible cleaning of our hair to get the lice out. And they would put this terrible product in our hair, and it burnt like hell and took forever and ever. They were rubbing and brushing and scratching. Oh God, it was so awful. And the fact that we were never warm. There was no cloth. So at Christmas, for example, because people have to survive they still want to keep their tradition. They still want to hold on to what they know, so there would still be a Christmas. But there was nothing for Christmas, so there was nothing to eat. So they made a special effort. The family tried, the mother, the brothers, whomever, a friend tried to find something a little bit special to celebrate Christmas. We would always go to the Mass at midnight in the freezing cold. It was snowing in Paris at Christmas time during this period. But we wouldn't have shoes that would cover our feet properly. And I was wearing the socks that my four brothers before me had been wearing, so they had to be mended. There were actually women that were mending all day long socks stockings, pullovers, anything, so that it would still be used for years, years and years by different people in a family. And I remember this terrible feeling that I had this one pair of shoes with a sole made up wood because there was no rubber, no leather. The same pair of shoes so heavy with the wood sole and just open toe how do you call like sandals. That was what I wearing in the freezing cold to go to the midnight Mass. And I mean that they

painted it too. They painted it because this way you would have a different look, so that it was painted white when I had my first communion as we were Catholics. It was painted white, but it had been brown before and before that it had been red. But it just passed from one child to another, and we were doing the best we could. And Christmas was always one present on the fireplace, of course, for each one of us. Usually it would be a pair of socks or pair of gloves. Something practical something warm and that was really a very special thing to have if it could be had at all that how the families lived. You know we weren't the only one. The other thing that was really scary and painful was these constant trips to the shelters, the basements, to the caves. When particularly we had been told that our monuments, our buildings, and these places the Germans occupied of course city were going to be bombed because the allies were the bombers. You know they were obviously the liberators but when you drop bombs from a plane you don't always drop it in the right place. It is hard. The target is hard to find, so naturally the civilian gets hit very often. It is not the Germans who are bombing their own places. It's the Allies and that is the irony. I learned as a child to identify the sound of planes, so I was able to tell if it was German planes, English planes or American planes and the sound until I was twenty-five oh my God, more than thirty-five at least I was still scared when I heard the noise of the plane I couldn't hear the noise-sound of a plane without have tightening in my stomach and sweating coming over me, because it was like a conditioned reflex. I had lived

that for five years when I was a child and every time it ended in destruction. It meant bombs, it meant death and I was really scared of this. It was hard to get out of my system, but we went to the shelters anywhere we could find when we had these attacks. That was very painful because we would be huddled together in those dark, dank, damp places to protect our lives and we would be there for hours waiting for the end or waiting for the destruction or of death we didn't know when it was going to hit us next. So we'd be having like this I would be huddled against my mother. My brothers would be there and the neighbors and some friends. We would all be there and many of us would be praying chain praying constantly all through the night until we would be free to come back home and that was really bad. It was bad because I can't remember ever sleeping during that period of the war. We were constantly awoken taken out of our the only place where we had a little comfort. A little bit of warmth, we were taken out in this freezing cold. It always cold for some reason and we had a blanket around us. WE were in our nighties. Most of us didn't even have a sweater, so we couldn't really be warm and we were just shivering in the shelters waiting for the end of the bombings. And of course every time the dawn would come and finally we would hear the siren and we would know we could get out and we were safe. You can imagine just oh my God we made it through one more day and we really appreciate life I tell you and every day you don't know if you are going to get-up. You don't know if you are going to still have your brother, your mother or anybody next to you. It is really something you

really learn to appreciate. We of course knew of the resistance movement. In a way my mother was a resistent because of what she did. One of my brothers was not in the resistance, he was too young. Anyway but he volunteered to be in... I don't know what it is called here. It is basically a corps of like paramedics that would always be on hand there to help the people and to get them to the hospitals and attend to them, give them first aid whatever when there was any one of these aftermaths of attacks. Personally, I didn't know any resistance except one who as a child again I really didn't know and I was not supposed to know. It was only after that I knew . That was during one of those summers my mother managed to make possible for us during the holiday, big holiday of summer when school was over . She was trying to get us the kids out of the city where it was so unhealthy to live to go to a place in the country. And in the country generally you could get a little bit more food like you know there would be fruit trees for example you could get fruits from the trees though every owner of the land or garden or whatever was really keen on not having their thing touched, so it was healthier. She always managed to find a place to rent for us to spend the summer. And during one of those summers a man arrived who looked very old to me but at that time he must have only been 22 and he had been wounded in the arm. He had a bullet in his arm and we were took him in and he was operated right there with out anesthesia to get the lead out and he stayed with us while his wound was healing. He was French. He didn't say anything about what he was doing. Obviously my family knew one and

that he was in the resistance and yet he was wounded. I knew him personally because he befriended me as a little girl and we would have walks together and it was a wonderful cover-up for him you see because he could go out of the house with this little girl who was his sister taking her out on walks and then he would talk to me about one thing or another. And I really grew very fond of him. After the war, many years after I wanted to know where he was and what he was doing. As adult as a young adult I was curious and I found him eventually after years. I think I was at least already sixteen or seventeen years old and he was a hair dresser in Paris. He had his own salon and when I saw him when I went to have my hair... It was my excuse and I couldn't [get] him to talk he wouldn't talk about anything. He wouldn't talk about the war about what he did nothing. I was disappointed and he almost acted as if he didn't know me. It was interesting. He really wanted to keep those things secret even after the war. he was so modest I guess. I don't know. He just wouldn't talk about it. It was interesting so I know someone personally. And naturally we had all the ugly scenes of the war. There was always something bloody going in. I remember once. I don't know where we were living at the time. I heard these screams next door and there were two men and I looked over the fence because they were making quite a bit of noise and sounding so violent. Anyway they were fighting each other with knives and I understood later on that there were a lot of private feuds going on during the war during the occupation between men and women over the question who was siding with who and

people would fight among themselves and at the end of the war. Naturally all the people men, women that had been supporting siding with the enemy were really, really badly treated. it was like lynching was going on at the time. The women would be out with the guys the Germans were seized marched through the streets and I saw that it happened. The hair, the head was completely shaved so that they were marked. Everybody knew that they had been sleeping with the enemy. This is what was happening. But behind those acts of violence and revenge and what have you there was also private feuds excuses to get back at somebody you didn't like. Obviously that was a perfect opportunity to get back at someone you hated for some reason and quite a few people did that. And it happened in every country after the war. And even beyond that the so called collaborators or so called whores, you know women that had befriended or sleeping with a German. There is a whole story behind that too, and who is to judge a woman who is under constant starvation and doesn't know if their kid is going to live. A sick kid that can't get any help-no medicine, no money, no food, no nothing. It takes a lot if you are offered a little help by a soldier takes pity on you and your children. I'm sure it takes a lot to say no and to say go to hell. She is thinking of her kids, so she gets a little help. Then, she discovers that particular soldier is a human being after all. He is not a mean Nazi. They like each other and they befriend each other like they would if they were if the same nation, right? Maybe they even fall in love and to has happened. I mean that is one if the consequences of

war, you know. Life goes on. Human beings still love each other, hate each other, beat each other, People die for no reason. It is a mess. It is a consequence of war. The civilians, being people not in the army like we were, very often know more about war is than in terms of the consequences than the military people. the military people know what they have to do. They follow orders and there is a general purpose and at least active in doing what they have to do. But the civilians are just passive people that have to take all with out being able to fight back. Whatever that has happened they have to just let it go. They have no way to do anything but take it and take it as it is. They really are the victims of a situation they have not created. This is true for every nation that is at war. I'm sure it was true for the Germans, the German civilians and families. the women and kids that went from a horrible war for them too it was terrible. They didn't want a war any more than we wanted, the Polish wanted, the Austrian wanted. You are just victimized without having much choice. This a very brief outline of the consequences of the occupation by the Germans to the kind of life we had on a daily basis. I'm giving it through the perception of the child, of course, and what I learned a little bit afterward.

After the war... first of all, it took about three years during which we heard the rumors that the American, the Allies, were coming but they didn't . So that was another major impact on in my memory as a child that there are people called the Americans. It was mostly the American we heard of not so much the

English. The Americans are the people who are going to save us. That is what we understood. The Americans were like gods. I didn't even know what an American was. That they were gods. They were the people who were going to save from their misery we lived. For three years, for three years we were talking and hoping that the Americans were coming, but they didn't come. When finally they really did come and we knew it was true, it was a tremendous feeling of relief and hope. And we began to think my God maybe just maybe we are going to be able to get rid to the Germans and going to be able to end the war. But we were not too sure. But as they came closer and we heard the news, you could imagine we were suddenly wanted to celebrate. We wanted to show our country was back. And we would put flags in the windows and we would poke our heads out and ignore the cour de fleur which was the German German limitations to go outside and we would turn on the lights and we would get put into the streets but then very shortly we would start to hear shot guns and the Germans would be there and the tanks of Germans would be rolling through the streets and with with this very special noise of the German tanks and we would hear boots of the parades of the German soldiers on foot as they crossed the streets and when that happened we knew wee better get home because we could be shot. Understand that all during that period streets of my city or any city in France big city were empty, absolutely empty. there was was no transportation of what so ever by cities. There were just a few who had means of getting somewhere by very special pass. And the tanks of the German and the German

troops were in the streets. You have to tell me if you come to the end.

Yeah I will.

So when we began to hear the Americans were coming for sure, it was a beginning of hope believing it was going to come to an end. And D-Day came. That was a tremendous feeling of elation and we were beginning to hear more and more now of the B.B.C. radio talking English with the news that we were being invaded. Invaded means by the friends: The Americans and English in Normandy and we were having tremendous hopes but we were still occupied by the Germans and the Germans knew they were losing the war were retaliating. So there were a lot of arrestation and executions of French people during that period. And also senseless slaughter occurred because the Germans were so mad. They had to give up and defeated. They were trying to revenge at the last minute, so they did senseless things like which I heard if at the time as a child was so monstrous like they rally a whole village of French people men, women, and children and put them all in a church with a priest and set fire to it and whoever was trying to escape child or woman adult was automatically shot dead by the Germans outside. Things like that we heard at the time we were liberated already at some parts liberated the Germans were still. Now when the Americans came to my city in Paris and I saw them in their tanks standing in their Armored car, they just looked like gods to me. Those were the Americans I had heard of so much and who indeed were coming to save us. They were roaming through the streets high and proud and

smiling and blonde and beautiful. They had all these things in their hands they were throwing to us, and it was candies, and chocolates and cigarettes and chewing gum. And I have never seen those things. I thought it was some kind of... I didn't know what they were actually and we were getting them and women would go up the car and would embrace them and kiss them. For the first time in all those years, I saw around me people smiling. I hadn't seen anyone smile since that day I heard the radio announce the declaration of war. My people were smiling for the first time. We had a smile on our face and I tell I'll never forget that day when the Americans came in Paris. I'll never. I'm grateful. I'm so grateful to this day. They did it. They took over and threw those people out, and they gave us back our nation, our land, our homes, but mostly our freedom to be who we are our own people. It just was the happiest day of my life. Since that day, I swore I would come to this country to live and at least I would come try to leave. I wanted to know this people. I wanted to know the American people. I wanted to be with them. I wanted to live with them. I wanted to thank them. I still feel that. Every time I meet a veteran, I just want to kiss him and say thank you. Because you see those young men, they were your age. They were sent by their countries to do a terrible job where they could lose their lives. I mean it is a fantastic thing that they did that and did it. I, owe my life, my family, family's life. Then the restoration of normal life to them. I really do. I feel strongly that way. After the war after the war it did not settle into normal life for

several years. Obviously, the country had to be put back to shape. All the roads, resources crops had to be redone. It was several years before we had something to eat regularly. I became aware fruit existed. I remember my first apple. I didn't know what peaches were. I never seen before peaches. I remember my first ice cream, it was three years after the war. All these thing the American movies, they were great. All this fantastic stuff in the United States and we were able to see all these things on the screen. I saw my first Disney movie after coming here. It was just fabulous. My family though got to fight to get back on their feet. My father was released from the prisoners camp, and he came back a complete stranger. he was about 100 kilos about 50 lbs. We couldn't recognize him. He was bitter, exhausted, miserable. He felt unwanted because his wife had to fend for herself all those years and the kids. The kids didn't recognize him. And it was really hard. I think it happened to every family almost family if he came back in one piece. /the family had tremendously difficulty adjusting coming back to man and wife, father and children, children and parents. It was a whole reeducation and we didn't know how to do it. And there were a lot of families began a serious split at that time.. They could not get back in the norm only love could save them. And the families who were saved by their love for each other were pretty much okay. But there were lots of families that were distracted and destroyed by the war. Definitely in my family that was the case. My family was destroyed by the war. No question about it. My father never came back to

what he used to be. My mother never did either. They were never the couple they were before. It was, it was a really very, very sad situation. And beyond that I don't know what question I haven't answered, but if you have any other questions you could look. I can't think of anything else to tell you. The only question I haven't quite talked about in detail is, well, the basics were. I adored the Americans and it made me come to this country.