



MEET MARGUERITE

Marguerite in Andrésy (France), circa 1946.

Marguerite Élias Quddus is a Holocaust survivor who immigrated to Canada in 1967 and settled in Quebec. You can learn about her experiences by reading her memoir, *In Hiding*.

Below is some background that will help you understand Marguerite's story.

BIOGRAPHY:

Marguerite was not even three years old when World War II began. She lived in Paris, France, with her parents, older sister named Henriette, and dog named Choukette. Marguerite's parents met in Lithuania, in Eastern Europe, and chose to settle in France where they opened a fur business. Life became harder for Jews in France when the Germans occupied part of the country in 1940. In 1941, Marguerite's father was arrested in a roundup of Jews. He was held in two French camps for several months until being deported and killed in a Nazi camp in 1942. Next, Marguerite's mother was arrested, but with help from a friend she was released. After this close call, she decided that her daughters must go into hiding to avoid arrest. The girls were sent to different hiding places in convents and with rural families like the Chatenays. After the war, Marguerite and her sister reunited with their mother, but continued to live in children's homes while their mother rebuilt her life. Years later, Marguerite got married in France; she immigrated to Canada with her husband in 1967.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

Marguerite's family lived in France, a country in Western Europe that was occupied by the German army in June 1940. The Germans occupied the northern part of France, called the Occupied Zone, and put in place many anti-Jewish policies. The southern part of France, called the Free Zone, was run by a new French government called Vichy that went along with German orders, and even created its own anti-Jewish policies that applied to the whole country. For example, in 1941 French police arrested many Jewish men who didn't have French citizenship, like Marguerite's father. Arrested Jews were deported and most were killed in Nazi camps, starting in 1942. Due to the increasing risk of capture by the French police or the German occupiers, many Jews went into hiding by using false papers and pretending to be Christian. There were organizations that helped Jewish children, like Marguerite and her sister, find safe places to hide. France was liberated by the Allies in the summer and fall of 1944. Approximately 77,000 Jews in France were killed during the Holocaust, including Marguerite's father.

"I'm sad because in the big nativity scene at the church, I saw baby Jesus surrounded by his family. Mine was taken away from me and nobody saw fit to say anything about it. In my bed after midnight mass, I smother my tears and hold my doll in my arms."

Marguerite Élias Quddus

