

My Mother

PREFACE:

These writings are dedicated to those approximately 1.5 million children who did not survive the Holocaust, to all the hidden children of the world, and all the children and adults who have been traumatized and live in fear due to anti-semitism and hatred. You have a voice.

To my loving mother Marie Kaufman aka Marie Poll aka Marie Poll Johnson aka Bubbie Marie, may her memory be a blessing (1941-2022). She experienced the traumas of being a child during the Holocaust, and of immigrating from France to America at the age of 10 without speaking English. Her writings and family history will be shared for generations and generations. She suffered quietly as a child scared in hiding and had suffered so much pain the last 10 years or more of her life due to the disease Amyloidosis, and yet her strength to not give up and to make sure to see her grandchildren and children thrive is what brought her to Life, even thru unlivable physical conditions. My mother wrote me a note on 11/20/2011 when she gifted me with the Book she edited *How We Survived* and said Deena "You are in this book in so many ways. Your love and support throughout the making of this anthology means so very much to me. In it, is shared the legacy of all those who came before you-and now you are the bearers of the legacy. With all my heart-I love you. Mom (Marie) "

May the hummingbirds always surround you mom, as you speak to me through them now.

My writings (book in the making) now honors Marie Kaufman, my mother, and her legacy. On the other side of the coin of Love, is Hate. Love is what Marie Kaufman, my mother, was all about. Love: share it, speak it, live it, remember it. L'Dor V'Dor, from generation to generation, we remember the love and bonds of families torn apart, and we will never forget.

To my son Matthew, who graciously experiences all the loves and joys of the world with curiosity and sees the glass three-quarters full most days.

To my son Trevor, who always fights for the underdog and our environment, and continues to seek the best life possible all the time- Carpe Diem.

To you my wonderful and beautiful children, Bubbie Marie said 'it's in your hands to make sure these stories and history are Never Forgotten'. May you both embrace your heritage and understand the importance of these writings and history, tell the truth and share the truth and not be hidden, unless it is for the purpose of saving your life and others, as was the situation for your Bubbie during the Holocaust. May you carry on the messages of your Bubbie Marie- there is no place for intolerance, bullying, no excuse for hatred ever, and that you must continue to speak out for those without a voice.

Deena Poll Goodman, Loving daughter, Loving granddaughter, Loving mother, Loving sister, Loving aunt, 2nd Generation Holocaust Survivor 2022

Le Gendarme (The Police Officer)

My mother returned to France with her husband to meet her rescuers' children in 1996 as they filled in the blanks to some of the stories of her upbringing.

He came knocking at the door every morning, making his rounds. His heavy, hard sole dark shoes polished and untouched, black belt snug around his waist, solid baton on one hip and a gun on the other hip, his peaked hat always in alignment with his pointed nose. We anticipated those even, jolting, firm, loud knuckles on the front door, and tried hard not to be home for those knocks or confrontations. One day, he caught us at home. We had not left for the day yet, and I had not been dropped off at the neighbor's home while my mother went to gather vegetables on the farm. I was only a year old, my mother clinging me tight to her breasts, while she stood face to face with the policeman that came each day and she tried not to be home for the visit. He was a man of little words, but his eyes told his story; Don't say anything I don't want to hear or I will have to take you with me, don't say you have a Jewish man as your husband or I will need to take him with me, and understand I am a man you might not be able to trust fully but you have no choice. Every day he asked the same questions, asking for my 'papa' but I did not know of a papa because I was taught that I only had 2 mamas until after the war, so I could never 'not' tell the truth.

Silenced by Adults

A child learns what they are taught, and fear was her middle name. 'Be a good girl', 'Behave', 'speak softer and quieter'. My mother, Marie Kaufman, recounts her days in hiding and we talk around the kitchen table of our Los Angeles home; I was 17 at the time. She was born in 1941 and lived with her parents, and two years later her sister was born at their rescuer's home in the village of Milhar, France. They were baptized with papers to fit in to their new adopted family. Farm life was quiet for the most part, with so much space to move about, yet she was not free and could not cross the road for fear that the Boogieman would come get her and take her away. The emotional energetic softness she could not get from her mother who worked during the day in the fields gathering food for the others in the village, she got from her family of teenagers that watched after her by day. They gave her smiles, hugs, make believe scenes with dollhouses, trying to give a young child something that felt 'normal'. Lavender fields and chickens roaming, but she herself was not free to roam. The wonderful teens that babysat her during the day taught her how to play games and kept her busy with milk carts and dollhouses, building and creating as much as a young child would do. Anything to keep her safe and entertained, and away from trouble.

Terrors of the Boogieman taking her away from her family kept my mother up at night. Where was her other mama? She saw him (referring to her father, my grandfather) in the middle of the night when it was safe for him to come out from under the house. It was no longer safe, and

too cold during the winter months for my grandfather, Michel Kaufman, to hide in the cave, Le Roc. So he came to the Catholic family's home where my mother and her mother were living.

By day, snug and curled up, rigid and silent, my grandfather (my mother's father) lay on hard wood in the dark space under the house. By night, he crept inside to snuggle with my grandmother and be with my mother. Speaking Yiddish or Polish together, in whispering words, they shared little more than discussed what might come next should there be a next. Getting by day-by day, night-by night, each week seemed to blend together.

(PHOTO BELOW)



Marie Kaufman, 1945, age 10, Passport photo