

RENEE SCOTT

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.



Renee Scott was born on February 13, 1906, in Calais, France, to Albert and Jean Scott. Renee had two brothers, George and Walter, and two

sisters, Yvonne and May. When Renee was two, her family moved to the United States, where her father was the director of textile factories in New Jersey and Rhode Island. In 1918, after World War I, the family returned to Europe and lived in Belgium. Renee and her younger sister May danced with the Antwerp Opera for two seasons until the family moved to eastern France, where Renee and Mary danced at the opera in Nancy, France for five years. Renee was briefly married to Prosper Barro. Their daughter, Alice, was born in 1925.

In 1938, Renee moved with her parents, siblings, and daughter to Paris. Shortly after moving to Paris, while working at a trade fair, Renee met John De Peuw. The two became engaged. Renee began working for Simone Pheter, the director of the Belgian Chamber of Commerce in Paris. Unbeknownst to Renee, Simone worked for the underground and provided aid to Jews. Renee frequently traveled to Brussels for work, and after one of her trips, Simone told Renee she had delivered information for the underground. Renee agreed to continue helping the underground. Together, Renee and Simone helped hundreds of Jews by providing false identification cards and visas under the cover of the Chamber of Commerce. Renee also acted as a courier, making frequent trips between Brussels and Paris. Renee's family was unaware she was working for the underground.

In November 1941, Renee was arrested in Brussels for her underground activities. After 12 hours of brutal questioning and beatings, she was taken to St. Giles, a German run prison in Belgium. Renee was kept in

solitary confinement for seven months. She was then transferred to Alexanderstrasse, a Gestapo-run prison in Berlin. On the train to Berlin, she was reunited with Simone, who had also been arrested. Their reunion was short-lived; after their arrival in Berlin, the Gestapo killed Simone. A week later, Renee was transferred to Moabit, a prison in Berlin, and Mauthausen, a concentration camp in Austria. In July 1942, Renee was sent to Ravensbrück, a concentration camp in Germany.

In May 1945, Count Folke Bernadotte, a Swedish Count and diplomat, negotiated the release of 10,000 female prisoners from Ravensbrück. Renee was one of the released prisoners. A month later, she was reunited with John, her fiancé, in Brussels. He took her to Paris where her entire family was waiting for her. Shortly after her liberation, Renee, John, and Alice moved to the south of France, where John died before they could marry.

In 1959, Renee moved to the United States to be with her daughter and grandchildren. Alice had two daughters, Patricia and Carole, and a son Marc. At the time of her interview in 1997, Renee had three great-grandchildren: Jennifer, Danielle, and Curt.